FUTURE
OF
ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

Editor : MOURAD WAHBA

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PREFACE

This collection consists of the papers submitted to the Second International Islamic Philosophy Conference that was scheduled on the 19th of December, 1981 and sponsored by Konrad Adenauer Foundation, West Germany. This conference was never held because it was cancelled due to my transference from Ain Shams University to the Ministry of Labour Force according to a presidential decree issued by President Sadat on the 5th of September, 1981, that is, immediately before his assassination.*

The theme of the conference, "Future of Islamic Civilization", was selected to represent an extension of the theme of the First International Islamic Philosophy Conference that was held in Cairo in November, 1979, namely, "Islam and Civilization". The papers presented at that conference tackled Islamic problems and concepts that prevailed in the past.

It occured to my mind that a conference that concentrates on the future would be fruitful, especially if it deals with the following question :

How could the Islamic civilization take part, once more, in pushing human civilization towards its true goal, that is, liberation of man. How could that be realized with the rising of the fundamentalists who aim at reviving the past ?

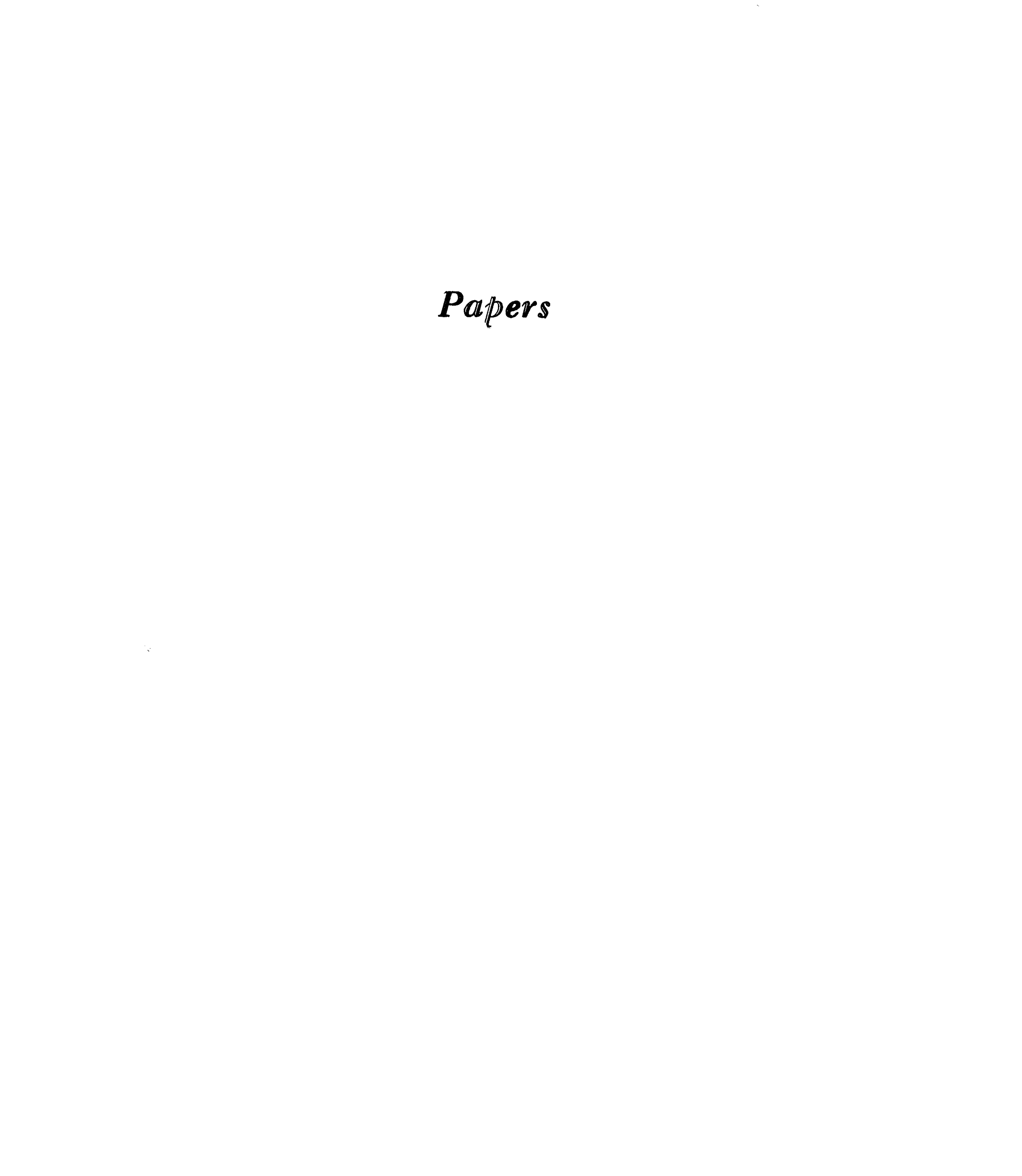
Finally, I hope that the present collection of papers could shed some light on this possibility.

Mourad Wahba

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* The famous decisions of Sadat taken on the 5th of September, 1981, as part of his crackdown on the opposition, included the sacking of 64 university professors who were transferred to government posts. They were all later restored to their original places in January, 1982 by President Moubarak.

Papers





ISLAM ET DEVELOPPEMENT DANS LE MAGREB INDÉPENDANT

M. Arkoun (Algérie)

On parle de plus en plus couramment de monde "musulman", de sociétés "musulmanes", de modèle "islamique" de civilisation et de développement, etc... Les sociétés où prédomine la religion musulmane semble accomplir ainsi un changement inverse de celui de l'Occident : tandis que celui-ci a, en effet, développé une version laïque de son espace social-historique à mesure que le capitalisme industriel a élargi ses conquêtes, les sociétés travaillées par l'islam renforcent, au contraire, la perception religieuse d'elles-mêmes à mesure qu'elles se laissent envahir par la civilisation matérielle et ses modèles de pensée et d'action.

Le Magreb indépendant illustre cette évolution depuis les années 1960. Les manifestations de l'islam, les références à ses enseignements n'ont cessé de se multiplier alors que les impacts du développement économique, social et politique atteignent les structures les plus anciennes et les mentalités les plus solidement ancrées. Comment expliquer cette distorsion entre une revendication religieuse souvent exacerbée et l'adoption de modèles de développement forgés à l'étranger ? S'agit-il d'une capacité exceptionnelle de l'islam à s'insérer dans tous les contextes de civilisation; y compris le plus matérialiste, ou d'une simple juxtaposition d'un discours idéologique mobilisateur mais passéiste et d'une pratique historique résolument moderne, tournée vers l'ordre étatique rigoureux, la productivité économique, l'exception sociale ?

On essayera de répondre à ces questions.

LE PROBLEME DE LA DEPENDANCE CULTURELLE EN A D N

I) ASPECTS DU DEVELOPPEMENT EN A D N

L'A D N fait partie du domaine aride et semi aride avec lequel coïncide l'extension de l'islam en général. Cette donnée géographique et climatique a conditionné l'économie du pays jusqu'à l'introduction récente de l'agriculture moderne et de l'industrie. Longtemps, la morale dite "islamique" a traduit, en fait, les contraintes d'une économie de subsistance : la sobriété **(qanâ'a)**, la frugalité **(kafâf)**, l'ascène **(zuhd)** comptent parmi les vertus les plus recommandées et effectivement pratiquées. C'est dire combien l'idéologique du développement qui multiplie les besoins et pousse à les satisfaire, est contraire au mode de vie et aux sensibilités séculaires en harmonie avec le milieu naturel.

Les idées de progrès, de changement, de confort matériel conditionnant le bonheur, de productivité par la mécanisation du travail, mettent d'autant plus de temps à gagner toutes les couches de la société que leur origine est liée à l'occupation coloniale; non seulement les traditions locales sacralisées par la tradition islamique résistent à toute innovation **(bid'a)**, mais il faut, en outre, disqualifier, refuser tout ce qui provient des infidèles. Cette situation a dominé toute l'évolution des sociétés maghrébines jusqu'au XIXème siècle : au moins chaque fois qu'on cède à la nécessité empirique du changement, on renforce l'idéologie de la justification par l'islam (recours aux consultations des docteurs autorisés comme les **'Ulamâ** de Quarawiyyîn, de la Zitouna, ou les réformistes de renom comme Afghani, 'Abdu...) Ainsi s'est développée jusqu'au une stratégie du refus de l'historicité, du repliement sur des croyances et des pratiques désuètes dans un environnement de plus en plus dominé par le capitalisme occidental.

Le passage de la domination coloniale à l'indépendance est très

récent : 1956 pour le Maroc et la Tunisie, 1960 pour la Mauritanie, 1962 pour l'Algérie, 1969 pour la Libye. En une vingtaine d'années, cependant, les sociétés maghrébines ont connu des évolutions si remarquables qu'on peut déjà distinguer deux périodes distinctes en ce qui concerne la place et les fonctions de l'islam dans le nouveau contexte.

Pendant les années 50 et jusqu'au 1965 environ, le discours et les attitudes qui ont accompagné les luttes de libération ont été marqués par la pression de "l'argumentation" coloniale. Celle-ci a utilisé les schèmes de l'idéologie propre à la IIIème République (unité nationale, laïcité, séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat, liberté, égalité des citoyens) pour réfuter les "prétentions" des Maghrébins à former une Nation, à instaurer un régime républicain, à mettre fin aux vieilles solidarités tribales, etc... Les leaders nationalistes formés dans les lycées et les universités françaises (Bourguiba, plusieurs membres du G.P.R.A., Mehdi Ben Barka) avaient à coeur de relever le défi colonial en défendant chez eux des idées libérales allant plus dans le sens des Lumières du XVIIIème siècle que dans celui de l'islam traditionnel. C'est ce qui explique les réformes courageuses d'un Bourguiba au lendemain de l'indépendance (polygamie, divorce, Ramadan, statut général de la femme). Les **'Ulamâ** réformistes (Allal al-Fasi, Ben Badis, Tahar Ben Achour...) tenaient, pour les mêmes raisons, à prouver la capacité d'accueil de l'islam aux apports de la modernité; ils ont défendu un rationalisme pragmatique qui ne s'étendait pas à un réel renouveau théologique.

Quand on aborde les années 70, on note une accentuation des processus de sécularisation dans les rapports sociaux et les pratiques économiques avec un durcissement concomitant de la revendication arabo-islamique. Les rythmes et les styles de cette évolution diffèrent, cependant, d'un pays à l'autre. Le poids de l'histoire récente (protectorats en Tunisie et au Maroc, colonisation directe en Algérie) et lointaine (processus historiques d'arabisa-

tion et d'islamisation différente d'une région à l'autre depuis la fondation de Kairouan en 682) se fait sentir dans les solutions politiques, économiques et culturelles adoptées dans chaque pays. Pressés par les besoins d'une population qui a plus que doublé en 30 ans, entrainée par la dialectique du développement/sous-développement qui a remplacé l'opposition colonisateurs/colonisés, l'Algérie se lance dans un socialisme radicalisant, la Tunisie tentée par l'expérience de l'exploitation coopérative, l'interrompt brutalement les 7 novembre 1969 pour s'en tenir, comme le Maroc, au lancement de plans plus ou moins rigides, mais dans le cadre d'un secteur privé dominant[2].

A ses débuts, l'expérience algérienne a permis la cristallisation de beaucoup d'espoirs de développement rapide, efficace dans le sens d'une libération économique qui devait, très vite, compléter la libération politique. Les mouvements animés par Mehdi Ben Barka au Maroc, Ahmed Ben Salah en Tunisie ont considéré avec sérieux le lancement d'un secteur autogéré pour remplir le vide laissé par le départ précipité des colons. On a également été impressionné par l'introduction d'une industrie industrialisante lourde) dans un pays voué jusque là à une agriculture traditionnelle ou dépendante (secteur colonial). A mesure que l'expérience s'est radicalisée avec les nationalisations, la Révolution agraire "pour aider la promotion économique, sociale et culturelle des masses rurales", la médecine gratuite, la protection sociale des travailleurs..., les pays voisins ont tenté de faire valoir la supériorité de la voie "libérale".

La rivalité sur les styles de développement économique est inséparable des stratégies de domination apparues au grand jour avec le problème du Sahara Occidental et le rôle de plus en plus activiste joué par cette autre Révolution magrébine, conduite depuis 1969, par le Colonel Qadhdhafi. Le volontarisme politique de celui-ci repose, comme celui des leaders algériens, sur la rente

pétrolière et la lutte contre l'impérialisme; dans les deux cas, on favorise les grands débats populaires, la mobilisation permanente des masses : Qadhdhafi se mêle à la foule et participe à ses effervescences ; Boumédienne fait discuter la Charte Nationale en 1976, de même qu'on vient de clore un vaste débat sur la personnalité culturelle de l'Algérie (problème qui concerne, en fait, la totalité du Maghreb). Dans le même temps, la Tunisie reconnaît le pluripartisme après avoir longtemps défendu le parti unique comme l'Algérie; le Maroc profite du consensus réalisé grâce à l'affaire du Sahara Occidental, pour faire élire un nouveau parlement. On assiste donc à une surenchère "socialiste" d'un côté et à une riposte "démocratique" de l'autre. Dans tous les cas, les sociétés s'éloignent rapidement des structures et des solidarités traditionnelles; celles-ci peuvent survivre dans les alliances politiques nouvelles, se reconstituer autour d'intérêts de classes en voie de formation; mais "le capital symbolique" qui médiatisait les rapports d'échange, les relations de parenté, les activités de subsistance ou de création culturelle, fait place à des critères de rendement, de profit, de progrès matériel, de puissance[3]. La réussite, individuelle prime la solidarité naturelle qui liait inconditionnellement les membres du clan ou du village, elle fait oublier l'intérêt général **(maslaha 'âmma)** si fortement recommandé par la **Chari'a;** la famille nucléaire tend à éliminer la famille patriarcale foyer de solidarités intenses; en réponse à un Etat dominateur, censeur, décideur, à une urbanisation sauvage si contraire aux traditions rurales, à un système de production perçu négativement parce qu'entièrement exogène, à des institutions politiques manipulées par d'étroites "élites" dirigeantes, les "nouveaux" citoyens recherchent une compensation dans la quête d'une fonction lucrative, d'un logement, d'une voiture, de possibilités de voyage, d'un commerce facile, etc...

Quelle place conserve l'islam dans ce nouveau contexte ? Ouvre-t-il des perspectives originales à un développement **endogène** comme le suggère la fameuse troisième Voie de Qadhdhafi ? Ou intervient-il comme simple discours d'appoint pour recouvrir d'un

voile de "spécificité", d'"authenticité", comme on le répète, des pratiques politiques, économiques, sociales, culturelles radicalement hétérogènes à l'inspiration, aux méthodes, à la finalité de "l'islam"?

La réponse à ces questions est aisée si l'on se contente de transcrire ce qui se dit, se vit, s'écrit au Maghreb au nom de l'islam. Mais lorsqu'on partage soi-même le destin collectif engagé par toutes les évolutions en cours, lorsqu'on a pour tâche, au surplus, de **dé-voiler** les réalités, les mécanismes fonctionnels, les enjeux véritables que les sociétés travestissent, occultent, oublient pour perpétuer un certain ordre, on doit dépasser le simple compte-rendu vers l'examen critique rendant possible la compréhension.

II) LES ENJEUX D'UNE NOUVELLE HISTOIRE

La phase historique qui s'ouvre, au Maghreb, avec les indépendances est nouvelle par rapport à la période coloniale, certes, mais davantage encore si l'on considère la totalité de l'espace social-historique dans la perspective de la longue durée. L'étude scientifique de ce passé a souffert, comme tout le reste, de la dialectique imposée par le discours et la pratique coloniaux. Je songe, par exemple, à la fameuse politique berbère qui continue de servir d'alibi au refus opposé au Maroc et en Algérie, à l'étude d'une langue et d'une culture pourtant vivantes et constitutives de la personnalité **maghrébine** dans son ensemble. Le débat ouvert en Algérie, durant ces derniers mois, n'a fait que confirmer de vieilles oppositions de groupes ethno culturels, compliquées, désormais, par de nouveaux clivages de classes.

On n'échappe pas à la problématique coloniale liée à celle plus générale de l'Orientalisme(5) en multipliant les imprécations et les expressions d'indignation ; il faut revenir à l'étude sans **a priori** ni orientaliste, ni nationaliste de ce que j'appellerai **l'espace maghrébin et l'espace islamique.** Ces deux espaces confondus dans le discours nationaliste autant que le discours colonial s'acharnait

à les disloquer et les opposer, doivent être **repensés** dans les conditions socio-économiques et l'environnement scientifique inédits que connaît le Maghreb depuis seulement une vingtaine d'années. Je dis bien l'environnement scientifique, car on va voir comment le discours nationaliste officiel tend à enfermer la société dans une perception imaginaire de son passé et de son identité au mépris des normes et des données les mieux établies de la connaissance scientifique.

II — a) **L'espace maghrébien.**

On partira de quelques observations géopolitiques; on retiendra ensuite les faits marquants de l'aménagement d'un nouvel espace social et culturel.

Les indépendances ont consacré des frontières politiques remaniées par les colonisateurs (français, italiens, espagnols), mais dont les principaux tracés remontent dans un lointain passé : la Tripolitaine a été rattachée à la Tunisie sous le nom **d'Ifrîqiyâ,** alors que la Cyrénaïque l'a été à l'Egypte dès la première conquête arabe; les contours de la Tunisie, de l'Algérie et du Maroc ont varié depuis l'installation des Aghlabides à Kairouan (800-909), des Rustamides à Tâhert (777-909) et des Idrisides à Fès (789-926). Les Turcs ont contribué à une plus nette délimitation des entités libyenne, tunisienne, algérienne, marocaine, saharienne. Les revendications du Maroc sur la Mauritanie et le conflit en cours sur le Sahara occidental attestent la permanence d'une dialectique très ancienne entre la visée unificatrice, centre — lisatrice — faut-il dire impérialiste — ? — de l'Etat islamique et les fortes autonomies régionales fondées sur les solidarités tribales. Il se trouve qui c'est au Maroc et en Tunisie que l'Etat d'inspiration islamique a connu la plus longue continuité; les discontinuités dans l'espace et dans le temps ont été, au contraire, fréquentes en Algérie. Cela explique le volontarisme activiste de l'Etat né en 1962.

Dans l'enthousiasme des luttes de libération et dans l'euphorie des indépendances reconquises, on évoquait volontiers le thème de l'unité Maghrébine en référant au précédent des Almohades et des Almohades. L'idée a des bases historiques, sociologiques, culturelles, économiques indéniables; mais son abandon dans les discours officiels atteste une évolution significative des "élites" dirigeantes et des stratifications sociales dans les cinq pays. Tout indique que l'espace politique maghrébin demeurera divisé en cinq (bientôt en six ?) nationalités dont les traits communs demeurent pourtant nombreux et puissants.

Quel que soit l'avenir de l'espace politique, l'espace social est profondément bouleversé depuis les indépendances. Le phénomène du déracinement amorcé dans les années 50, est devenu un envahissement des villes par les ruraux. La déchéance des médinas traditionnelles se traduit par la fuite de l'ancienne bourgeoisie vers les quartiers européens; en Algérie. Ces mouvements forcés de populations aux modes de vie très conservateurs ont rendu nécessaire une politique de réappropriation de l'espace"national". On fixe de nouvelles finalités pour les villes et on tente de restituer aux campagnes assez de vitalité pour arrêter l'émigration intérieure et à l'étranger. Problème redoutable puisqu'il s'agit d'encourager l'industrialisation qui entraîne la formation de pôles d'attraction urbains et de moderniser en même temps l'agriculture.

Les solutions et les rythmes adoptés dans chaque pays diffèrent; on ne s'attardera pas à les décrire. Du point de vue qui nous occupe — adéquation de l'islam en tant que religion et cadre culturel au développement —, on retiendra surtout les changements qui affectent les cadres sociaux de la connaissance.

On sait que Marx distinugait deux types de catégories sociales : 1) ceux qui vendent leur force de travail et ceux qui ne la vendent pas ; 2) ceux qui sont proprétaires des moyens de production et ceux qui ne le sont pas. Dans le Maghreb

traditionnel, il est difficile de délimiter ces quatre catégories ; les frontières qui les séparent et leur étendue sociale varient avec les milieux et les genres de vie prédominants : l'espace de la ville n'est pas organisé de la même façon que celui du monde sahraoui (civilisation pastorale) et celui des ruraux.

Lorsqu'on dit que les médinas sont aujourd'hui délabrées, surchargées d'habitants aux emplois précaires, il faut comprendre la disparition d'un tissu urbain serré, vivant, riche en fonctions intégrées, en signes et symboles qui cimentaient l'ordre de la cité sous l'autorité unanimement acceptée de l'islam. La médina de Fès donne encore une idée de ce que pouvait être l'organisation de l'espace urbain dans une ville maghrébine fortement marquée par les impératifs locaux et les apports de l'islam classique. On connaît très bien cet exemple grâce au travail de R. Le Tourneau; mais il faudrait une monographie aussi fouillée pour décrire les processus de désurbanisation, les disfonctionnements de ce qui est devenu "la médina", entendons l'espace abandonné par ceux qui l'avaient produit et maintenu jusqu'à l'intervention de l'économie moderne. Les mosquées, les tombes, les cimetières, les places publiques, les jardins, les fontaines, les boutiques, les rues réservées aux différentes corporations, les riches demeures... n'offrent plus qu'un spectacle exotique aux touristes étrangers, un sujet d'évocation nostalgiques aux musulmanes. Il est question depuis quelques années d'une restauration de la ville de Fès. On parviendra peut-être à sauver le tracé de la ville, les bâtiments les plus représentatifs de l'architecture islamique; mais on ne fera pas revivre la corrélation fonctionnelle typique entre la formation sociale propre à la cité maghrébine traditionnelle et ce qui nous nommons globalement, sans précisions historiques, ni sociologiques, l'Islam ? un Islam transhistorique et transsocial. En fait, les relations d'interdépendance économique entre les notables (a'yân), les 'ulamâ', les artisans groupés en corporations, les domestiques, maintenaient une cohésion de la cité sans éliminer les rapports de domination et

d'exploitation. Le pouvoir central exerçait un contrôle strict sur cet ensemble social en s'appuyant sur une armée composée d'étrangers au corps social de la ville; aidé idéologiquement par les **'Ulamâ** (fonctionnaires des waqfs, de la justice, de l'enseignement...), il utilisait le système de croyances, de représentations, de valeurs "islamiques" pour faire accepter son autorité. La dislocation de la base socio-économique de ce système entraîne le passage à un discours islamique nécessairement abstrait, puisqu'il n'est plus le produit d'une pratique politique, écomomique et sociale de cités bien délimitées.

L'espace social plus varié, plus complexe occupé par les sahraouis et les ruraux, est plus difficile à décrire brièvement. On y retrouve aussi les catégories définies par Marx; mais elles ne fonctionnent pas dans le champ clos de chaque groupe, tribu ou région. En outre, plus que les critères de propriété et de travail, il faut considérer les structures de la parenté, les lignages, les stratégies d'alliance et d'expansion, les antinomies entre le style de vie pastorale et la recherche de sécurité chez les ruraux. On sait qu'il y avait la propriété dite **melk** et la propriété **'areh** qui impliquaient des rapports différents avec la terre, le temps de travail, l'environnement social et économique. L'intervention coloniale a déjà ébranlé les fondements de l'existence nomade (débuts de la sédentarisation) et de la vie rurale; mais les nouveaux Etats et l'impact de l'économie moderne provoquent la liquidation brutale d'un univers qualifié d'"archaïque". Le cas algérien est — comme pour l'espace urbain — plus radical que les autres (à l'exception de l'expérience Ben Salah en Tunisie). On lit dans la Charte nationale de 1976 :

"La Révolution agraire n'avanceraient pas si elle ne parvenait à modifier la mentalité du paysan et à **détruire** chez lui toutes les structures archaïques de pensée, d'action, de vision du monde".

L'administration coloniale avait déjà brisé la tribu; la Révolution agraire veut moderniser la société paysanne en la détruisant, en la soumettant à une domination symbolique importée avec les techniques et l'idéologie du développement. Ici comme en ville, on supprime les bases institutionnelles, économiques et même écologiques de l'islam dit populaire pour généraliser l'islam abstrait valable pour **toute la nation.** Ce volontarisme politique est parfaitement illustré par l'expérience algérienne de 1.000 villages socialistes destinés à ménager une transition entre le monde rural archaïque et la ville où s'élaborent les décisions, se vivent les nouveaux modèles émancipateurs; on donne aux communes des possibilités de gestion et d'appropriation de l'environnement; on multiple les écoles, les lycées, les centres de formation professionnelle, les antennes médicales, les équipements socio-éducatifs; mais le partage de l'espace continue à se faire de façon inégale puisque la nouvelle bourgeoisie bureaucratique récupère les beaux quartiers des villes, tandis que le petit peuple se presse dans de petits appartements mal entretenus quand il n'est pas refoulé dans les bidonvilles.

On voit en quel sens on est fondé à parler d'une **nouvelle** histoire. Ni au Maghreb, ni dans aucune autre société, l'Etat islamique précaire et inadéquat n'a jamais réussi à modifier en profondeur les conditions sociales et économiques d'exercice du pouvoir au point d'instaurer la Cité idéale rêve par les **fuqahâ** et les philosophes. Les pouvoirs locaux qui l'ont contesté n'ont évidemment pas réussi davantage. La géographie n'est dont pas seule à expliquer la persistance du régionalisme et des particularismes que les Etats modernes cherchent à réduire définitivement([6]). Pour la première fois, on fait franchir à toute la société le seuil structurel au-delà duquel non seulement les rapports de production et d'échange au niveau national et international, mais la circulation des modèles culturels, la désurbanisation des médinas et l'urbanisation moderne d'un espace plus étendu avec une emprise très forte de l'Etat national, transforment radicalement "les structures archaïques de pensée, d'action, de vision du monde".

La prolétarisation des nomades, la transplantation des ruraux, la dilution socio-culturelle des bourgeoisies traditionnelles, l'apparition d'"élites" politiques d'origine variées, ont changé les cadres sociaux de la mémoire collective, les demandes de connaissances, les conditions d'interprétation des rôles sociaux et historiques aboutissant à des consciences de classe. Autrement dit, on détruit les bases sociales de l'idéologie islamique traditionnelle qui opposait l'élite **(khâssa)** à la populace **("awâmm)**, la Cité vertueuse gérée par le Calife/Imâm (7) et les forces sauvages **(wahchî)** rebelles à l'Ordre établi par la religion et les sages.

Comment le discours islamique accompagnant ces révolutions concilie-t-il la liquidation de la société archaïque et le retour à l'identité arabo-islamique dans ses manifestations les plus traditionnelles ? C'est ici qu'apparaissent toutes les distorsions, les décalages, les incohérences, les "bricolages idéologiques" souvent notés dans le discours social contemporain au Maghreb. Ce discours comporte deux régistres principaux qui correspondent à des acteurs sociaux, à des finalités, à des fonctions à la fois distinctes et complémentaires. Tous les agents responsables de la conduite du développement parlent le langage strict technique, efficace de la bourgeoisie d'affaires, des politiciens stratèges ; mais cette masse de ruraux que l'on veut "moderniser" maintiennent une demande de traditionalisation (8) d'autant plus forte que l'islam représente pour elle un refuge et un mode de protestation contre les atteintes brutales à ses valeurs "archaïques". Nous verrons comment l'Etat contrôle le discours islamique pour le couper des croyances "superstitieuses", des expressions "populaires" et l'orienter vers les grandes idées abstraites, mais mobilisatrices comme l'égalité de tous, la justice sociale, la lutte contre la domination des riches, le matérialisme destructeur de l'Occident, le socialisme "islamique", etc...

Les classes moyennes issues de promotions sociales récentes

rejoignent les ruraux d'une part, le courant officiel d'autre part pour réclamer le maintien ou la réactualisation des "valeurs" islamiques. Comme on l'a noté, elles trouvent dans cette attitude un moyen de maintenir la communication avec leurs origines campagnardes et un tremplin pour poursuivre l'ascension dans la nouvelle société.

Des forces nouvelles traversent ainsi l'espace maghrébin suscitant des prises de conscience et des évolutions rapides. L'arabisation et l'islamisation constituent, à cet égard, des opérations complexes où se mêlent beucoup d'attentes et de déceptions, de projets et d'échecs, d'efforts réalistes d'acquisition et de fantasmes, de fonctions positives et de stratégies de domination. Les uns éprouvent la fierté de retrouver une langue, un patrimoine culturel, une richesse spirituelle considérés comme très largement répandus au Maghreb avant la colonisation; les autres se découvrent beaucoup moins arabisés et islamisés que ne l'affirme le discours officiel (ce qui est implicitement reconnu dans les termes mêmes d'arabisation et d'islamisation); les occidentalistes — techniciens, technocrates, hauts cadres du dévelopement — craignent sans trop l'avouer, une récession culturelle si l'acquisition de l'arabe n'est pas accompagnée de la maîtrise d'une ou deux langues usitées dans la communauté des chercheurs scientifiques; les dirigeants quant à eux, mesurent la nécessité de recourir à l'islam et à sa langue privilégiée d'expression en tant qu'instances éprouvées de légitimation du pouvoir.

Dans les programmes d'action, les préparations et les confrontations qu'ils nécessitent, la sociologie linguistique et la sociologie religieuse portant sur le domaine magrébin, n'interviennent pratiquement jamais. Plus dans le domaine économique, le volontarisme des Etats fait des principales données réelles du terrain, tant il vise à assurer l'homogénéité linguistique (avec la seule langue arabe littérale, écrite, savante), religieuse (islam sunnite mâlikite) et culturelle (culture arabe classique et moderne, commune

au monde arabe et culture arabe maghrébine en voie de création et devant être versée elle-même dans le creuset arabe commun) de chaque espace national. L'étendue du consensus et la manifestation des réticences à l'égard de l'arabisation et de l'islamisation varient avec les styles d'intervention du pouvoir. Il est difficile, pour ces raisons, de se prononcer sur l'avenir des processus engagés. On peut, en revanche, tenter de préciser les contours du nouvel espace islamique qu'on veut faire coïncider avec l'espace maghrébin.

II — b) **L'espace islamique : approche descriptive et critique.**

La connaissance de l'espace islamique au Maghreb est inséparable de celle des espaces religieux locaux où se meuvent encore toutes les populations nominalement converties à l'islam. Bien que combattue avec constance par les réformateurs politico-religieux dès l'époque almoravide et almohade, puis par les 'Ulamâ' réformistes en ce XXe siècle, la religion dite populaire est restée aussi vivante que les dialectes arabes et berbères qui lui servent de véhicules.

Les anciennes écoles coraniques **(kuttâb)**, [9] les **zâwiya** et même les universités prestigieuses de Tunis et de Fès qui maintenaient et diffusaient les enseignements élémentaires de l'islam, sont de plus en plus supplantées par des institutions mieux contrôlées par l'Etat, mais pas nécessairement plus modernes. C'est dire que l'accès aux croyances, aux pratiques — tout comme à la littérature et aux parlers — non contrôlés par les nouveaux gestionnaires du religieux et du culturel, est devenu très difficile. Et l'on ne sait si l'indifférence des jeunes chercheurs à l'égard de cet important domaine, est due aux difficultés rencontrées ou à l'éloignement courant qui s'instaure entre élite et masses populaires. Il faut dire aussi que la forte attraction du style de vie moderne se conjugue avec le refus de l'univers traditionnel pour provoquer la condamnation des "superstitions" des conduites "irrationnelles", des croyances "désuètes", etc...

Il reste, pourtant, que les manifestations unanimement qualifiées d'islamiques ne sont dénuées ni d'irrationnel, ni de traditionalisme, ni de style populiste, ou ostentatoire selon les milieux, et les circonstances et les célébrations. Le regard psychologique et sociologique demeure donc nécessaire à tous les niveaux de la manifestation religieuse. A répéter sur le mode apologétique les définitions classiques de l'islam sans prendre en compte les contenus de la religion vécue, on demeurera dans le flou, le vague, le conventionnel facilement généralisable à toutes les sociétés[10].

Où en sont les pratiques magiques, les rituels très anciens qui entourent les moments importants de la vie : naissance, 7ème jour, circoncision, majorité religieuse, mariage, mort, 40ème jour après la mort, etc... Où en sont les pèlerinages locaux, le culte des saints, l'attente messianique, les conduites liées à la **baraka** et à l'honneur inséparablement[11] ? Ce monde exubérant de symboles, de forces surnaturelles, de conduites propitiatoires, de fantasmes instaurateurs, continue d'être largement représenté non seulement dans les compagnes, mais dans les villes envahies par les ruraux. Et cependant, rien n'en apparaît dans le discours épuré, rationalisant, volontiers scientiste—mais rarement scientifique— des **'Ulamâ'** officiels et d'une nombreuse jeunesse nourrie de littérature apologétique. A s'en tenir à ce discours et aux manifestations visibles de la résurgence de l'islam — comme disent les observateurs extérieurs —, on parvient à former une image "moderne" et dynamique de la religion au Maghreb.

Concrètement, on voit partout se multiplier les mosquées généralement bien fréqentées: le nombre de pèlerins à La Mekke augmente chaque année et donne lieu, au départ et au retour, à des manifestations où l'ostentation sociale tend à dominer l'inspiration religieuse; le repos hebdomadaire est déplacé du dimanche au vendredi en Algérie; le commerce de l'alcool. Les sciences islamiques (Coran, exégèse, **Hadîth, Fiqh, Sîra)** viennent en tête des préoccupations; mais on note une attitude très sélective à l'égard

des auteurs, des textes et de leurs présentateurs au public actuel; on choisi les versets et les **hadîth** qui justifient les fins de l'action politique et économique et permettent de fonder un **socialisme islamique**; on écarte les auteurs classiques suspectés par les sunnisme mâlikite (Ibn 'Arabî, Ibn Ruchd, Hallâj, Ibn Sînâ; peu de recours aux grands Ach'arites et au **Kalâm** en général) ; on retient les interprétations qui favorisent un consensus **(ijmâ')** dans le temps (générations d'aujourd'hui avec celles — sélectionnées — du passé : **Sahâba,** Hanbalites modérés, Mâlikites) et dans l'espace (sociétés musulmanes contemporaines).

Dans les perspectives islamiques ainsi "rétablies", on s'intéresse également à des questions d'histoire maghrébine dans la ligne évenementielle et officielle déjà évoquée; on traite des problèmes d'actualité comme la propriété, la femme, l'enfant, la jeunesse, la démographie, l'éducation... Des **'Ulamâ'** qui font autorité dans divers pays musulmans, sont invités à faire des conférences pour montrer que l'islam offre des solutions spécifiques à tous les problèmes modernes et que c'est trahir la nation et Dieu que de copier des solutions occidentales. La sécularisation, la séparation des pouvoirs politiques et religieux **(dawla/dîn),** le statut de la femme, la langue arabe, comme langue sacrée, la propriété, constituent les sujets les plus brûlants où la moindre audace critique déclenche les affrontements les plus passionnés.

Il y a plus : cet immense discours islamique que répandent désormais les institutions et les organisations nationales et internationales dans le monde, se définit aussi par ses silences, ou si l'on veut, ses tabous. Il n'est jamais question de l'histoire critique du texte coranique, ni du rôle des luttes sociales et politiques dans la genèse de la pensée et de la Loi uniformément qualifiées d'islamiques, ni des conditions idéologiques et littéraires qui ont pesé sur la rédaction de la **Sîra**, ont orienté les **exégèses** coraniques,

transfiguré les acteurs historiques de La Mekke et de Médine en Témoins irrécusables, en Transmetteurs scrupuleux de tous les événements fondateurs de l'islam comme foi, comme textes sacrés, comme Loi, comme cadre de perception, de jugement, d'action. Parce que ces interrogations proprement historiques ont longtemps retenu et continuent de retenir l'attention des "Orientalistes", les 'Ulamâ' concurrencés dans leur magistère, menacés de disqualification, dénoncent avec vigueur ces enemis de l'islam supports du colonialisme et de l'impérialisme. La littérature et les conférences sur ce thème attirent les foules autant que les ouvrages apologétiques écrits par des occidentaux — "amis de l'islam" (le succès facile inspire bien des auteurs dans le climat actuel). Les rares intellectuels maghrébins qui se risquent dans la voie d'une reprise critique des problèmes historiques, théologiques, philosophiques soulevés par tout essai d'insertion de la religion dans le contexte social-historique et intellectuel contemporain, sont vite marginalisés, au mieux comme des musulmans "sociologiques", au pire, comme des imitateurs serviles de modèles occidentaux. Ceux, en revanche, qui s'en tiennent à des évocations élogieuses du passé — éloge implicite des descriptions érudites, éloge explicite des essais — ou au renforcement des tendances actuelles, deviennent les représentants "qualifiés" de chaque islam "national".

Les silences qu'on vient de signaler ne sont pas propres à l'islam maghrébin; ils sont un trait caractéristique de tous les discours islamiques "nationaux"; trait qui renvoie lui-même à une situation politique et socio-culturel comparable. Les intellectuels ne constituent nulle part un groupe porteur d'idées assez large, assez homogène pour peser tant soit peu sur l'opinion publique. Les lieux et les moyens d'expression leur sont sévèrement mesurés; ils dépendent partout du pouvoir politique qui ne les "honorent" que dans la mesure où ils renoncent à leur fonction critique, [12] ou la maintiennent en deçà d'un seuil qui varie selon les régimes et les conjonctures.

Cette dernière observation permet de distinguer dans l'islam contemporain trois espaces de production de mouvements où se mêlent le religieux, le politique, le social, le culturel, le psychologique et même le psychique.

Il y a d'abord le **niveau national** qui est le plus concret parce qu'on y rencontre des croyances, des pratiques, des langages qui vont de la localité la plus humble, le groupe le plus particulariste aux programmes d'action propre à chaque gouvernment. Il y a une tonalité et des accentuations propres à l'islam touareg, djerbien, rifain, chleuh... ; comme il y a des fonctions et des tendances assignées à l'islam libyen, tunisien, algérien, marocain à l'échelle nationale. Ces diverses expressions enracinées dans des terroirs ou des conditions socio-économiques précises sont encore très mal connues; et nous avons dit pourquoi et comment l'islam officiel détourne de telles enquêtes[13].

Le second niveau est **international**, ou, si l'on veut, **mondial.** Il ne s'agit pas d'une addition des islams nationaux qui s'expriment dans chaque société musulmane; mais d'une formation idéologique commune aux conférences, congrès, séminaires, rencontres qui se multiplient à travers le monde entier. Des organisations puissantes comme la Ligue islamique mondiale, le Congrès islamique mondial, l'Organisation de la Conférence islamique contribuent à la formation et à la diffusion d'un mode de pensée, d'une thématique, d'une catégorisation du réel, d'une stratégie conceptuelle qui délimitent l'espace de **l'Ortodoxie islamique contemporaine.** C'est à ce niveau que l'islam se propose comme une **alternative** actualisable aux modèles d'action historique représentés par le capitalisme libéral, le communisme et les formes variées de socialisme. Les échanges entre le niveau mondial et les niveaux nationaux officiels sont fréquents et intenses; ils aboutissent aux consensus faciles lors des sommets de la Conférence islamique, à l'unification des méthodes et des programmes d'enseignement religieux, mais aussi à l'internationalisation des mouvements islamiques de con-

testation. Tous les gouvernements dans le monde et, en premier lieu, les grandes puissances ont pris conscience de l'immense force historique que représente l'émergence de la nouvelle Orthodoxie islamique. Celle-ci est en marche au Maghreb, comme ailleurs; mais on ne peut évaluer ses chances de s'y imposer en tant que Voie historique comme en Iran.

Je qualifierai le troisième niveau de **métaphysique** à condition d'y inclure tous les problèmes habituellement étudiés sous le nom de théologie dans les religions du Livre. Le mouvement par lequel l'esprit veut aller **au-delà** du monde empirique (= mouvement métaphysique, métahistorique, métasociologique) pour connaître "l'être en tant qu'être", analyser les raisons qui font surgir partout les questions de l'origine, de la fin, du sens; ce mouvement au cours duquel l'esprit éprouve le goût de l'infini, l'amour de l'absolu, traverse la totalité du discours coranique, rehausse l'expérience prophétique au niveau de l'universel concret, inspire, enfin, les production les plus originales de la pensée islamique. Or c'est ce niveau qui est perdu de vue jusqu'à l'oubli total dans les usages idéologiques propres aux deux premiers. Dans les sommets islamiques, se réunissent des chefs d'Etat et des ministres des affaires étrangères; dans les mouvements revendicatifs, se retrouvent des citoyens mécontents; dans les hauts conseils islamiques et les grandes organisations, s'assemblent des croyants rivés à leurs certitudes, donc étrangers à l'interrogation métaphysique. Ajoutons que l'islam pragmatique et militant des réformistes ou des nouveaux **'ulamâ'** n'a ni le temps, ni les moyens intellectuels des réactualiser les débats théologiques qui avaient fait la gloire de la pensée islamique du Ier au Vème siècle de l'Hégire. Et quand même ce travail se ferait, il resterait à l'insérer dans les conditions d'exercice de la pensée scientifique contemporaine. Parce que les progrès les plus décisifs de celle-ci depuis les années 50 ne sont encore accessibles ni en langue arabe, ni dans aucune langue islamique(14), toute référence à l'épistémologie critique, à la critique des discours, à l'histoire déconstructive...

reste totalement opaque aux intellectuels monolingues. Ce phénomène socio-culturel s'étend partout à mesure que s'étend le seul usage de l'arabe, par exemple.

Dans le rapport immédiat, vécu que chaque musulman entretient avec sa religion, la distinction des trois niveaux ne s'impose évidemment pas; ils sont postulés dans chaque conduite rituelle, chaque affirmation de foi, mais ils ne sont pas assumés intellectuellement. Nous touchons ainsi à une autre donnée très éclairante sur l'islam contemporain : l'ordre de la perception du réel, de sa rationalisation et de l'imaginaire sont confondus dans un discours et une pratique qui se réclament d'un réalisme, d'une rationalité, d'une scientificité indépassables puisqu'ils sont garantis par la Parole de Dieu. Des opérations mentales qui relèvent exclusivement de l'imaginaire sont transférés à la rationalité et au domaine scientifique pour faire coïncider l'islam avec l'ambiance argumentative et expérimentale de la société moderne. Ainsi se forge une fausse conscience collective, un **imaginaire social** qui est "plus réel que le réel"[15] puisqu'il commande, en définitive, le destin des sociétés. Pour rendre plus claire encore la distinction que nous visons ici, considérons ce passage :

"Soit Dieu. Quels que soient les points d'appui que sa représentation prenne dans le perçu; quelle que soit son efficace rationnelle comme principe d'organisation du monde pour certaines cultures, Dieu n'est ni une signification de réel, ni une signification de rationnel; il n'est pas non plus symbole d'autre chose. Qu'est-ce que Dieu — non pas comme concept de théologien, ni comme idée de philosophe — mais **pour nous qui pensons ce qu'il est pour ceux qui croient en Dieu ?** Ils ne peuvent l'évoquer, s'y référer qu'à l'aide de symboles, ne serait-ce que le "Nom"; mais pour eux et pour nous qui considérons ce **phénomène historique** constitué par Dieu et ceux qui croient en Dieu, il dépasse indéfiniment ce "Nom", il est autre chose. Dieu n'est ni le nom de Dieu, ni les images qu'un peuple peut s'en donner, ni rien de similaire. Porté,

indiqué par tous ces symboles, il est, dans chaque religion, ce qui fait de ces symboles des symboles religieux, — une signification centrale, organisation en système de signifiants et de signifiés, ce qui soutient **l'unité croisée** des uns et des autres, ce qui en permet aussi l'extension, la multiplication, la modification. Et cette signification ni d'un perçu (réel), ni d'un pensé (rationnel), est une **signification imaginaire**"(16).

J'ai souligné les termes et les passages qui intéressent directement notre réflexion : peu importe ici l'orthodoxie théologique, la portée philosophique de ce qui est dit de Dieu; ce qui est neuf et pertinent pour la compréhension des changements que connaît l'islam dans les sociétés contemporaines, c'est que nous avons à penser ce qu'est Dieu pour ceux qui croient en Dieu dans une société donnée et une conjoncture historique précise; et c'est que les significations imaginaires **fondent** l'ordre d'une société, produisent son histoire bien plus efficacement que la perception et la pensée rationnelle souvent oblitérées, ou déviées par un imaginaire plus expansif; c'est qu'enfin, en reconnaissant la nécessité et l'efficacité de l'imaginaire social, l'analyse n'oublie pas de signaler ses effets négatifs allant jusqu'à détourner à son profit la fonction de la pensée réfléchie.

La notion d'imaginaire social ainsi définie réhabilite à la fois la raison et l'imagination : ce n'est plus la raison impérieuse et impérialiste du théologien, du philosophe classique ou de la science positiviste qui parle avec condescendance de "la folle du logis"; de même, l'imagination n'impose pas ses visions, ses images, ses constructions mythiques comme les voies supérieures de la connaissance (cf. le vieux débat entre **Muthos** et **Logos** qui se retrouve dans la pensée islamique entre **bâtin** et **zâhir**). L'historien sociologue, anthropologue redéfinit des concepts figés par des siècles de scolastique, en montrant que, dans les faits, l'irrationnel et les significations imaginaires pénètrent le domaine de la raison, de même que l'exigence de cohérence, de connaissance, de clarté est

présente dans l'imagination créatrice. Cela explique pourquoi le mythe, le symbole, le signe, la métaphore sont au centre des recherches actuelles; on ne peut interpréter correctement les discours religieux, à leurs différents niveaux, sans faire appel aux acquits récents sur ces concepts-clefs. (17)

Tout ce qui précède impose les conclusions suivantes qui sont en même temps un programme de recherches sur les trois niveaux de manifestation de l'islam au Maghreb et ailleurs :

1. Le discours islamique à ses trois niveaux postule que la religion est au-dessus de la société et de l'histoire : elle leur impose une orientation conforme aux volontés de Dieu sur les créatures et le monde. Ce postulat est rejeté par la pensée marxiste qui affirme, au contraire, que les religions sont des épiphénomènes idéologiques qui voient la **réalité** des mécanismes d'évolution historique. Cette aporie philosophique, transformée en sujet d'affrontement idéologique, n'est pas encore perçue comme telle par la pensée islamique; on laisse le soin de la résoudre, ou de la dissoudre, aux forces dominantes de l'histoire.

2. Tout en laissant ouverte la question du facteur dominant dans l'évolution historique, on peut admettre que la religion joue un rôle premier dans certaines conjonctures; il reste, alors, à préciser les éléments constitutifs de la religion : les textes sacrés ? la tradition de transmission et d'interprétation ? les pratiques rituelles ? la Loi et le personnel religieux ? la totalité de la culture imprégnée par le système de croyance et de non croyances en vigueur dans une société ? Chacun de ces contenus est en soi très complexe; que dire de tout cet ensemble malaxé sous le nom d'islam. La confusion atteint son comble quand on y ajoute toutes les complications nées du développement.

3. Si, pour simplifier, on dit que la force dominante, permanente en islam, c'est l'essence de Dieu telle qu'elle s'exprime dans le Coran, il resterait à s'interroger sur l'essence de Dieu dans le judaïsme, le christianisme, le bouddhisme... et son impact dans l'histoire.

4. L'essence de Dieu dans le Coran émerge elle-même dans une expérience historique dont la restitution exacte relève de la compétence de l'historien **avant** le théologien; or, l'histoire de la formation de la doctrine islamique — comme des autres religions — nous enseigne que c'est le **contraire** qui s'est produit : le théologien et les docteurs de la Loi ont **lu** les textes fondateurs avant les historiens, ou avec l'aide d'historien converti au schéma théologique. Cette inversion de l'ordre du savoir s'est étendue avec l'intervention des militants politiques et des masses populaires en lutte pour leur émancipation; il en résulte une usurpation de compétence et une subversion de la vérité historique en "capital symbolique" dont vit l'imaginaire social. Voilà pourquoi, l'historien, aujourd'hui, doit toujours traverser les significations imaginaires accumulées par les acteurs sociaux, pour atteindre les réalités originaires qui leur a donné naissance.

5. La raison "islamique" mise en place par la science des **Usûl al-dîn** et **Usûl-al-fiqh** et qui continue à fonder ontologiquement et méthodologiquement les discours islamiques contemporains, doit être redéfinie à la lumière des interférences signalées entre les ordres de la perception, du rationel et de l'imaginaire. Le "capital symbolique" pèse plus sur son exercice que la quête du réel nu([18]).

6. Par sa forme littéraire effectivement inimitée, par sa richesse symbolique, par sa cohérence profonde voilée par le désordre introduit dans le corpus **(mushaf)**, par l'ima-

ginaire dynamique que nourrissent ses récits, le texte coranique, tel qu'il nous est parvenu, requiert une pensée ouverte, libérée des certitudes dogmatiques, du poids d'une tradition non encore **déconstruite**, pluridisciplinaire, interrogative. Le dernier commentaire qui satisfait à ces exigences — dans les limites et avec les moyens de son temps — est celui de Fakhr al-dîn al-Râzî (m. 606/1209). Les nombreux commentaires tentés après lui imitent, résument, sélectionnent ou se servent du Coran pour défendre une école. Rien, dans l'écrasante littérature dite moderne sur ce sujet, ne rappelle l'ampleur de l'information, la finesse de l'analyse, l'audace critique, la générosité intellectuelle, la richesse spirituelle, le souci de l'exhaustivité qui caractérisent les **Mafâtîh al-ghayb** — titre à lui seul si suggestif, surtout quand on découvre la puissante rationalité de la **démarche.**

Pour mesurer le degré d'aliénation culturelle et de carence intellectuelle de l'islam actuel au Maghreb[19], il suffit de considérer les honneurs officiels prodigués dans les trois pays à Maurice Bucaille pour son ouvrage sur **La Bible, le Coran et la science.** Celui-ci demeure un grand succès de librairie ; les élèves de lycées, les étudiants le citent comme une autorité **moderne** dans la pensée **islamique.** Ce même public ignore, l'œuvre de Râzî (et celles d'autres grands classiques, bien sûr), il ne s'interroge pas sur les raisons historiques et sociologiques d'une telle rupture avec un passé, pourtant si magnifié dans le discours courant. Tarir ou détourner la source de la vraie richesse de l'islam, occulter les causes de l'aliénation politique et culturelle en concentrant l'accusation sur la période coloniale et en refusant de porter le regard historique vers une durée plus longue : tels sont les procédés qui retardent la formation d'une pensée maghrébine attachée à ses vrais problèmes. Parmi ceux-ci, il y a la dépendance culturelle que nous allons évoquer brièvement pour terminer cet exposé.

II) LE PROBLÈME DE LA DÉPENDANCE CULTURELLE :

Je voudrais montrer dans ce paragraphe la portée historique pour tout le Maghreb, du débat culturel officiellement ouvert, en Algérie, pendant plusieurs mois. Les interventions les plus remarquées ont été celles du ministre d'Etat Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi et de l'ancien ministre de l'éducation nationale Mostefa Lacheraf[20]. D'une façon générale, le ton polémique, les affirmations passionnées l'ont emporté sur la recherche sereine d'un langage libérateur et d'une problématique adaptée à l'ampleur des problèmes posés. Que les autres pays du Maghreb n'aient pas ouvert de débat semblable à l'échelle nationale tient surtout propre à chaque gouvernement pour désarmorcer les tensions intérieures trop fortes; aucun d'eux, en fait n'échappe à la dépendance culturelle et aux difficultés qu'elle entraîne.

Au départ, il est nécessaire de trancher la question des rapports entre l'ordre culturel et l'ordre politique : celui-ci monopolise la compétence — décision et tend à contrôler, orienter, limiter l'exercice de la compétence — savoir qui appartient aux artistes, aux écrivains, aux poètes, aux intellectuels. Pourtant, du point de vue de la connaissance et de la valeur, le culturel englobe le politique et le dépasse: les œuvres culturelles nourrissent l'âme collective et sont assurées d'une durée illimitée en l'absence de catastrophe, de guerres, de piété iconoclaste; les événements politiques sont éphémères, contingents, souvent arbitraires, parfois très négatifs. Un gouvernement se grandit toujours en encourageant toutes les formes, toutes les voies, tous les niveaux de création culturelle; il se diminue en censurant l'activité de l'esprit, même lorsqu'il avance des principes sacrés comme l'unité nationale. L'histoire prouve amplement que ce principe — indiscutablement positif quand il exprime un consensus général et libre — a partout servi à généraliser la domination d'une famille, d'un groupe, d'une région économique à des unités géopolitiques rivales, ou faciles à annexer. Les exemples de "l'Ile de france" et de l'Angleterre sont

particulièrement éclairants; on connaît les résurences actuelles de l'Ecosse, du pays de Galles, de l'Irlande du Nord, de la Bretagne, de l'Occitanie, du pays Basque, de la Corse, etc...

On peut discuter à perte de vue sur les philosophies politiques qui sous-tendent les solutions nationalistes et fédéralistes; ce n'est pas ici le lieu de s'y engager. Constatons seulement que les Etats maghrébins ont tous opté pour le modèle jacobin, centralisateur que la France tente, pour la première fois depuis la Monarchie relayée par l'Empire et la République "une et indivisible", d'assouplir. Retenons aussi que la définition de la nation héritée de l'Europe bourgeoise du XIXème siècle, ne résiste pas à l'analyse historique, sociologique et culturelle moderne. La langue, la religion, la culture, les expériences communes invoquées aujourd'hui pour cimenter l'unité nationale permettent de franchir une étape; mais elles changent sans cesse de contenu, de fonctions, d'importance dans la conscience des citoyens. L'enthousiasme des luttes de libération, l'euphorie des premières années d'indépendance ne mobilisent déjà plus les jeunes générations; l'islam soumis aux pressions conjuguées de la sécularisation et de la critique scientifique, compromis par des usages politiques trop oppresseurs, n'exercera pas le même impact sur un nombre aussi elevé de fidèles; la langue arabe désacralisée et restituée à ses véritables limites linguistiques et culturelles, sera plus aisément associée à d'autres langues étrangères...

Ces évolutions sont déjà inscrites dans les nouvelles institutions, les pratiques économiques, le système éducatif, la recherche du profit, bref toute la civilisation matérielle avidement recherchée sous le nom de développement. Mais il y a de graves distorsions, des décalages inquiétants entre le volontarisme politique et économique d'une part, la définition de l'identité historique et culturelle du Maghreb d'autre part. Au lendemain des indépendances, de jeunes historiens magrébins ont, à juste titre, dénoncé les constructions idéologiques de l'histoire coloniale qui

réduisait le rôle de l'islam et de l'arabe pour mieux relier l'entreprise coloniale aux antécédents "occidentaux" — Rome et le christianisme — des "Berbères". Mais pour éliminer une telle vision, on a surtout **inversé** les rôles et les qualifications des acteurs étrangers au Maghreb: Rome et le christianisme ont été impérialistes et réellement étrangers, tandis que les Arabes — et à un moindre degré les Turcs — sont les véritables édificateurs de la personnalité maghrébine.

De fait, le récit historique strictement dépendant des sources arabes anciennes n'a aucune peine à substituer une épopée à une autre. Les manuels scolaires et une abondante littérature due à des essayistes, des idéologues et même des universitaires([21]) renforcent et diffusent un cadre de pensée manichéen qui oppose les Arabes créateurs d'un Etat, d'une administration, d'une armée, d'un milieu urbain intégrateur, d'une architecture monumentale, d'une culture savante... aux **Afâriqua** libérés de leur aliénation latino-chrétienne et, surtout, aux Berbères, masse anonyme, dispersée, violente, prompte à **l'apostasie et à l'hérésie,** mais totalement convertie à l'islam après une résistance dérisoire. Après leur conversion, les Berbères perdent jusqu'à leur nom : on ne parlera plus que des Arabes et des musulmans; le nom réémerge sporadiquement avec les mouvements, eux-mêmes éphémères, des Almoravides et des Almohades; mais c'est avec une idéologie islamique farouche et entourée des clercs arabisés jusque dans leur généalogie que ces dynasties ont réussi à étendre leur pouvoir. Une analyse sémiotique du discours historique maghrébin montrerait aisément qu'il est construit sur le modèle des contes populaires et produit des effets identiques sur l'institution de l'imaginaire social magrébin. Celui-ci revêt une force jamais égalée depuis l'enseignement de l'histoire, confié à des maîtres très mal initiés à la méthode historique, est généralisé à toutes les couches sociales. Sans doute, le récit historique remplit une fonction idéologique dans toutes les sociétés, comme autrefois, le récit mythique dont il perpétue bien des procédures et des structures; mais

dans le Maghreb colonisé, puis indépendant, il entretient des représentations pieuses, épiques, conventionnelles qui constituent, aujourd'hui, les principaux obstacles épistemologiques à l'appréciation objective de la situation culturelle au Maghreb.

Comment remédier, en particulier, à ce sentiment lancinant qu'une grande partie de ce qui s'écrit ou se dit sur la personnalité du Maghreb reste extérieur au pays réel, inadéquat ou franchement faux par rapport aux divers témoignages vivants que les groupes porteraient sur eux-mêmes si une idéologie contraignante ne limitait leur créativité, leurs voies de réalisation intellectuelle et culturelle ? Pourquoi rencontre-t-on chez tant de maghrébins cette irrépressible nostalgie de **possibles** fortement ressentis, mais toujours différés, refoulés, réprouvés : **possible** d'une conscience coïncidant avec les données immédiates d'un terroir, d'un environnement, d'une histoire, d'un ordre social, d'un langue; **possible** d'une culture nationale libérée des modèles classiques abstraits (musique, poésie, décoration, architecture), de l'imitation des genres et des techniques de réalisation importés, des idées et des goûts d'une intelligentsia arabisée ou occidentalisée; **possible** d'une vie socio-culturelle intégrée excluant l'exil intérieur et l'exil extérieur qui inspire tant le chanson populaire, la substitution brutale des valeurs du monde industrielle à celles de la paysanerie[22], la division séculaire entre élite éclairée, dirigeante et masses toujours attirées par la "contre-révolution"; **possible** d'une pensée enfin libre de s'attaquer, à partir de l'exemple maghrébin, à tous les problèmes que nous avons énumérés à propos de l'islam, du Coran, du Prophète, etc...

Une jeunesse si nombreuse, si active, si audacieuse qui s'affirme de plus en plus au Maghreb, est trop hantée par tous ces possibles pour ne pas travailler à leur réalisation; délivrée de la thématique inévitable, mais aliénante des étapes coloniales et nationaliste, elle inaugurera la phase de la lutte pour l'indépendance

culturelle du Maghreb. Quelques conditions du succès de cette lutte peuvent d'ores et déjà être énoncées :

a) La situation de dépendance culturelle du Maghreb est largement dûe au retard considérable des études historiques tant dans leur phase historiciste et philologique que dans leurs exigences pluridisciplinaires actuelles. Un grand nombre de manuscrits arabes restent à éditer et même à arracher aux cachettes des collectionneurs, des familles jalouses de leurs privilèges culturels, des bibliothèques mal explorées. De même, une exploration éthnographique et une analyse éthnologique systématique de l'espace maghrébin, doivent être conduites par des équipes spécialisées. Il resterait à mettre au point les méthodes de **lecture** des documents ainsi rassemblés, les règles d'écriture d'un discours compréhensif, explicatif, déconstructif. Un tel discours s'interdira, par exemple, de parler d'hérésie ou d'apostasie d'un groupe, parce qu'il déconstruira **d'abord** l'univers religieux des acteurs, les enjeux symboliques de leur lutte par **comparaison** et non par **opposition** avec ceux d'un groupe devenu dominant. Il ne fera pas non plus l'éloge systématique du groupe maître d'un Etat, d'une armée, etc... sans avoir présenté l'univers socio-politique des groupes dominés du point de vue de l'anthropologie sociale et politique et non à partir des définitions imposées par le groupe vainqueur, reprises sans examen, par les historiographes officiels [23].

b) Dans les contextes nationaux actuels, les dénominations Berbères et Arabes sont devenues trop polémiques et chargées de passion ; elles ont, en outre, perdu leur pertinence éthno-culturelle et politique au profit des appellations nationales : Libyens, Tunisiens, Algériens, Marocains, Mauritaniens. Celles-ci se spécifient chaque jour davantage à mesure que se développe le travail de soi sur soi de

chaque société politiquement délimitée. L'adoption du pluripartisme en Tunisie et au Maroc, l'omnipotence du parti unique en Libye et en Algérie, constituent, par exemple, des facteurs de différenciation de grande portée. Quelles que soient les configurations futures des sociétés politiques, il subsistera toujours un espace culturel magrébin commun. De ce point de vue la référence aux maghrébins et au Maghreb est plus pertinente que les cadres nationaux que l'on force artificiellement à contenir une histoire, une pensée, une littérature, des arts tunisiens, algériens, libyens, marocains... Que l'on adopte un regard arabe et islamique ou que l'on rétablisse le monde berbère dans son véritable importance historique, sociologique, culturelle, on est amené à prendre en considération la totalité de l'espace magrébin à deux niveaux, certes, différents: niveau de l'Etat, de l'élite, de la langue et de la culture savante fonctionnant comme des modèles arabo-islamiques importés d'Orient; niveau d'un peuple et d'un espace socioculturel berbères dont l'éclatement en groupes isolés, différenciés du fait de la géographie ne doit pas voiler la continuité profonde [24].

c) La réhabilitation d'un espace social-historique magrébin ne pourra se faire que si des obstacles actuellement dominants sont surmontés : 1) l'illusion nationaliste qui pousse à construire des personnalités nationales "spécifiques" en forçant certains faits, en éliminant les données inassimilables, en exagérant l'originalité de telle école, de tel auteur, de tel héros "national", en pratiquant l'annexion systématique de grandes pauvres qui appartenaient, en fait à un ensemble arabo-islamique trans-social et, à fortiori, étranger à l'idée de nationalité; 2) le poids du fait accompli politique sur les esprits qui perdent de vue les facteurs durables de l'évolution historique pour se plier aux exigences immédiates de l'action et de la pensée (par exem-

ple, beaucoup d'étudiants en doctorat choisissent des sujets "nationaux" parce qu'ils sont plus assurés de trouver un emploi ; la Tunisie se désintéresse des tensions culturelles en Algérie et au Maroc parce que le fait accompli historique de l'arabisation a éliminé les parlers berbères sur son territoire; elle connaît pourtant la tension commune au Maghreb entre arabisants et francophones, monolingues et bilingues, etc...) ; 3) l'illusion culturaliste et spiritualiste qui voile ou minimise l'enjeu politique — au sens des luttes de classes pour la prise et l'exercice du pouvoir — de l'arabisation et de l'islamisation pour surévaluer la fonction de ces deux processus dans la renaissance des identités nationales. On perd ainsi de vue les dimensions constitutives de l'espace maghrébin : dimensions historiquement et structurellement antérieures à l'arabe et à l'islam puisqu'il s'agit des civilisations méditerranéennes et de la civilisation du désert. L'arabe n'est qu'**un** des moyens d'expression de l'effort d'appropriation, d'articulation de ces civilisations par l'islam au partir du VIIème siècle. Cette perspective historique et anthropologique peut seule sauver le Maghreb d'un nouveau repliement sur les ilôts étroits, détachés arbitrairement de son identité réelle.

d) La mémoire collective varie avec les pressions de sélection qu'exerce le présent sur le passé. Elle varie pour l'individu selon sa situation dans le groupe, comme elle varie pour le groupe dans son ensemble, pour la nation et pour la communauté. Au niveau islamique, les mémoires chî'ite, sunnite, khârijite sont différentes; au niveau national, les groupes sélectionnent les faits signifiants en fonction de leur intérêts et de leurs espérances. Dans le Maghreb actuel, il y a plusieurs mémoires collectives qui résultent non seulement de passés différents, mais de multiples grilles de lecture des mêmes événements qui sont censés

constituer la mémoire historique de la Nation. Le récit officiel qui veut ainsi s'ériger en mémoire exhaustive de la Nation, n'est lui-même que l'expression d'une stratégie d'intégration et d'expansion développée par la classe politique avec la collaboration des clercs. Ceux-ci trouvent un cadre de pensée et un vocabulaire universaliste qui permettent de particulariser, disqualifier les mémoires excentriques. On trouvera un exemple très significatif de ces rivalités entre groupes, transposées en langage universaliste dans les mémoires d'Al-Baydhaq retraçant l'itinéraire d'Ibn Tumert; mais plus généralement, dans tout récit relatant la geste d'un héros ou d'un mouvement de résistance (24).

La mémoire exhaustive du Maghreb ne peut résulter ni d'une généralisation de la mémoire officielle, ni de la juxtaposition des mémoires particulières; elle est l'ensemble des affrontements, des tensions, des rivalités, des alliances, des solidarités vécus par les familles, les clans, les tribus, les confédérations; et, aujourd'hui, les classes, les régions, les nations. La difficulté pour l'historien reste de rendre compte de cette diversité sans céder aux pressions, aux prestiges, ou aux récompenses, aux fantasmes d'une seule fraction.

* * *

On voit tout le chemin qui reste à parcourir pour revenir à "l'intérieur du Maghreb" selon l'expression de J. Berque. A observer les changements sociaux et économiques intervenus en une vingtaine d'années, à considérer la croissance démographique qui entraîne la pression et multiplicité des demandes, mais aussi le dynamisme historique de toute la région, on peut prévoir que les affrontements idéologiques, les tensions entre les conduites pratiques, la culture scientifique qui accompagnent la civilisation industrielle

et les revendications traditionalistes répandues par un certain discours dit islamique, vont s'accentuer encore. Le Maghreb vit une transition inévitable entre la domination coloniale et l'impatience de maîtriser les voies et moyens modernes d'exercice de la souveraineté politique, économique, culturelle. Les rivalités entre nations magrébines elles-mêmes risquent de prolonger la durée de cette transition. Heureusement, le Maghreb est plus uni et plus orienté vers le dépassement de ses faiblesses séculaires que ne le laisse croire les péripéties politiques.

Dans la perspective d'un développement volontariste, l'évolution de l'islam reproduira-t-elle celle du christianisme depuis l'avènement du capitalisme industriel et du socialisme/communisme? A court terme, l'exemple iranien incite à répondre négativement. Il reste à évaluer le prix spirituel qu'entraînera nécessairement le succès temporel de la religion. On a signalé l'affaiblissement du niveau métaphysique au profit des usages idéologiques qui ne parviennent pourtant pas à imposer une doctrine scientifique de la société opposable à celles du libéralisme et du marxisme. Toutefois, le lieu que l'islam a instauré, dès les origines, entre religion, Etat (ou pouvoirs temporels) et monde profane **(Dîn/Dawla/Dunyâ)**, oblige à reconsidérer la légitimité théorique et la possibilité pratique du modèle occidental de séparation du spirituel et du temporel (je ne dis pas de l'Eglise et de l'Etat en tant qu'institutions concurrentes pour la prise et l'exercice du pouvoir). Si le Maghreb parvient à faire progresser ce vieux et toujours actuel débat dans un sens ni islamique intégrationniste, ni occidental diviseur et conflictuel, il renouera avec sa vocation profonde inscrite dans sa géographie et son histoire en captant aussi bien l'intérêt du monde arabo-islamique que celui de l'Occident méditerranéen.

NOTES

1. Sur les expériences magrébines en cours cf. Développements politiques au Maghreb, extrait de l'Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord 1977, C.N.R.S. 1979; Les problèmes agraires au Maghreb, extrait de l'A.A.N. 1975, C.N.R.S. 1977.

2. Cf. Problèmes agraires, op. cit.

3. Sur l'importante notion de capital symbolique traitée d'un point de vue authropologique, cf. P. Bourdieu : Le sens pratique, éd. Minuit 1980 et l'usage que j'en ai fait dans le concept de raison islamique, in A.A.N. 1979, C.N.R.S. 1981,

4. Sur la formation et les rôles des classes moyennes, cf. A. Zghal et autres Les classes moyennes au Maghreb, C.N.R.S. 1980.

5. La polémique vient de rebondir avec l'intervention d'E. Said: L'Orientalisme. L'Orient créé par l'Occident, Seuil 1980 et les réflexions de M. Rodinson dans La fascination de l'islam, Maspéro 1980. La discussion se poursuivra indéfiniment tant que des oppositions politiques affecterons l'examen de difficultés proprement scientifiques. C'est ce que j'avais indiqué dans "Pour une islamologie appliquée, in Le mal de voir, ethnologie et orientalisme coll. 10/18, no. 1101, Paris U.G.E. 1976, pp. 267-87.

6. L'explication géographique est encore invoquée par G. Camps qui écirt : "La Berbérie n'a pas de centre vivifiant capable de regrouper autour de lui des provinces périphériques : entre les pays tournés vers la Méditerranée orientale et ceux qui abordent l'Océan, la zône de vie agricole n'est qu'une étroite frange litterale, coupée de montagnes, le reste est un agré-

gat de hautes plaines ou de plateaux steppiques, admirables voies de passage... où les conquérants ne font que passer... "G.Camps : Berbères. Aux marges de l'histoire, éditions des Hespérides 1980, p. 78. Il faut ajouter que les dominations étrangères jusqu'au XXème siècle ont faussé ou empêché le jeu des forces internes de la société.

7. Sur la distinction entre Autorité légitime du Calife/Imâm et pouvoirs conquis, cf. M. Arkoun : Autorité et pouvoirs en islam, in Pouvoir et Vérité, éd. M. Michel, Le Cerf 1981, Voir aussi toute la littérature sur l'opposition entre **Makhzen** et **siba.**

8. Sur la portée sociologique de ce concept, cf. A. Laroui : La crise des intellectuels arabes, Maspéro 1974, pp. 45-58 et Développements politiques, op. cité., passim.

9. Sur les fonctions de ces kuttâb en milieu rural, cf. Fanny Colonna : La répétition. Les tolbas dans une commune rurale de l'Aurès, in A.A.N. 1979, pp. 21-35.

10. On rêve — c'est bien le cas de le dire — d'une application à l'islam maghrébin et à tous les autres, des méthodes, des problématiques définies par exemple dans J. P. Deconchy : Orthodoxie religieuse et sciences humaines, éd. Mouton 1980; ou dans les Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions ed. C.N.R.S.

11. Cf. R. Jamous : Honneur et Baraka. Les structures sociales traditionnelles dans le Rif, Cambridge University Press 1981. Ce genre de monographies doit être cultivé pour toutes les régions du Maghreb.

12. Cf. H. Bleuchot et T. Monastiri : Libye : L'évolution des institutions politiques, in Développements politiques, op. cit., pp. 184-87.

12a. La situation des intellectuels au Maghreb mériterait un examen critique sans complaisance ni à eux-mêmes, ni au pouvoir; voir ce que j'en dis dans Religion et société d'après l'exemple de l'islam, in Mythes et Croyances dans le Monde, 1982.

13. Voir pourtant les enseignements qu'on peut en tirer dans Bruno Etienne : "Magie et thérapie à Casablanca : Yamina Fekkar : La femme, son corps et l'islam. Questions et contradictions suscitées par le vécu quotidien en Algérie, tous deux in A.A.N. 1979, op. cit. Tout ce volume est consacré au "Maghreb musulman en 1979".

14. Cette observation soulève la colère de ceux qui croient qu'il s'agit d'une incapacité linguistique de l'arabe à exprimer le monde arabe; qu'ils se détrompent et se rassurent : le retard ou les insuffisances d'une langue ne font que traduire l'état des connaissance, des curiosités, des activités de ses usagers. Autrement dit, les partisans d'un renouveau des langues islamiques doivent consacrer autant d'ardeur à étudier les langues et les sciences modernes qu'à lire les grands auteurs arabes eux-mêmes.

15. Cf. Castoriadis : L'institution imaginaire de la société, Seuil 1975, p. 197. Ainsi, les principes qui fondent le droit religieux, le statut de la femme, les rapports entre adultes et enfants, maîtres et esclaves... relèvent de l'imaginaire plus que de la rationalité, ou, si l'on veut, d'une rationalité imaginaire qui légitime l'ordre dans le groupe où elle s'impose. Ghasâlî parlait déjà de l'irrationnel dans les rites du **Dajj.**

16. C. Castoriadis, **op. cit.**, pp. 196-97.

17. Je ne puis donner ici une bibliographie même sélective; il s'agit d'un puissant mouvement de pensée qui englobe tous les

problèmes du langage, de la littérature, de la critique des discours, de l'anthropologie, etc...

18. Cf. M. Arkoun : Le concept de raison islamique, **op. cit.**

19. Quelles que soient les expressions utilisées par l'analyste, la polémique est hélas inévitable; en parlant d'aliénation et de carence, je ne dénonce pas, mais je déplore et je décris. Il est évident que pour réagir correctement devant le livre cité et d'autres semblables, il faudrait posséder une culture biblique, coranique et scientifique qui manque précisément à la grande majorité des musulmans. Est-il besoin de préciser aussi que je n'ignore pas les efforts de nombreux collègues et amis, chercheurs et écrivains qui ont une vive conscience de ce que doit être l'indépendance culturelle du Maghreb.

20. Le premier a publié sous le pseudonyme d'Ibn al-Hakîm des Reflexions sur la personnalité nationale algérienne, in El-Moujahid du 25/3/1981; le second une plus longue réflexion pouvant servir de "cadre général pour un essai d'explication de certains phénomènes culturels liés à l'histoire et à la société" in Algérie-Actualité numéros 811,812 et 813 (Avril-Mai 1981). En première page du no. 813, la rédaction du journal a retenu ce passage : "Comme on peut l'imaginer, les faits proprement "culturels" pour la plupart, **carences** ou **négatifs,** auxquels doit remédier chez nous, l'action d'une culture nationale bien outillée au double plan **idéologique** et matériel, ne sont pas toujours rassurants dans leurs aspects les mieux observables à l'oeil nu, loin de toute idéalisation. Si, dans ce domaine, il n'y a ni création, ni équipement, ni **réponses** aux besoins par des structures et des agents formateurs en nombre et en **qualité,** les écartélements, les oppositions et les influences nocives dont il a été parlé, iront en s'aggravant encore longtemps" (c'est moi qui souligne). Lorsqu'il était ministre, M. Lacheraf avait également publié un

texte très lucide et très courageux sur l'arabisation telle qu'elle se déroulait.

21. On comprendra que je ne puisse citer des noms. Je mentionnerai, cependant l'Histoire de la Tunisie, Le Moyen Age par F. Dachraoui, H. Djaït, A.Douib, M.A. M'rabet, M. Talbi, S.T.D. s.d. Je connais assez ces collègues pour savoir qu'ils adopteraient un autre éclairage et useraient d'un autre vocabulaire après un débat sérieux sur la valeur documentaire de toute la littérature historiographique concernant le Maghreb. Il va de soi que des exemples semblables ou pires ne manquent pas pour l'Algérie, le Maroc et la Libye.

22. Cf. Problèmes agraires, **op. cit.** Il y manque une étude au moins programmatique sur les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire chez les paysans maghrébins. Cette recherche me semble un préalable méthodologique et cognitif à toute évaluation des réactions de la paysanerie aux expériences révolutionnaires dans lesquelles on l'engage. L'essai de A. Bouhdiba : L'imaginaire maghrébin; étude de dix contes pour enfants, Tunis 1977, est intéressant, mais évidemment insuffisant dans la perspective que nous tentons d'ouvrir.

23. Ibn Khaldûn lui-même n'échappe pas à ce défaut. Mais pourquoi y échapperait-il puisque, de nos jours encore, on voit divers spécialistes de questions maghrébines, adapter leur écriture aux exigences de l'idélogie officielle. Selon le mot de R. Barthes, "L'écriture est un acte de solidarité historique"; je préciserai pour bien des cas, de solidarité de classe. Comment embrasser du même regard compréhensif (= prendre ensemble et saisir la totalité) un espace social-historique: telle est l'ambition de l'historien moderne. Encore faut-il que celui-ci ne méprise pas les réflexions pluridisciplinaires et les efforts d'articulation de résultats acquis dans les monographies les plus solides.

Une évaluation globale — inventaire et tendances idéologiques — de la littérature historiographique d'expression latine, arabe, turque, française, sur le Maghreb reste à faire. Pour la période romain, cf. M. Bénabou : La résistance africaine à la romanisation, Maspéro 1977.

24. Cf. l'abondante littérature au sujet de Abd el-Krim, Mokrani, Bouamama, Abd el-Kader, Yûsuf ibn Tachfîn, Ibn Tumert, etc... Sur la fonction socio-culturelle de l'oubli, cf. Fanny Colonna : Oubli, reconstruction, censure. A propos d'une recherche dans l'Aurès (à paraître).



ISLAM, NATIONALISM, AND MODERNIZATION IN TURKEY IN THE YOUNG TURK ERA

Ergun Ozbudun (Turkey)

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the intellectual currents in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, involving an attempt to reconcile Islam, nationalism, and modernization. In particular, the emphasis will be on the Second Constitutionalist period, or the Young Turk period (1907-1918) for the following reasons : First, this was a period of considerable intellectual freedom in modern Ottoman history. After thirty years of stifling Hamidjan absolutism, the newly acquired freedoms attracted many intellectuals to a lively controversy on how to save the Empire from collapse. Although in much of the period under discussion the Young Turk government treated the political opposition with a heavy hand, it did not try to suppress intellectual discussion and criticism at a less political and more philosophical level. Secondly, this is the first time when Turkish nationalism emerged as a strong, and eventually dominant, current of opinion, adding a completely new dimension to the older and more familiar controversy between the Westernists and the Islamists. Thirdly, an analysis of these controversies may shed light upon the road the Turkish Republic finally chose to pursue : secularizing and modernizing nationalism of Kemal Ataturk.

In the present account, the ideas of the Westernists have been consciously omitted, not because of their lesser intellectual value and consistency, but because they carried less political weight compared to those of the nationalists and the Islamists. Furthermore, the Westernists, although they were not personally anti-religious, did not attempt to make Islam a major ingredient in their thoughts. Their attitude is reflected in Abdullah Cevdet's famous statement that "there is no second civilization; civili-

zation means European civilization, and it must be imported with both its roses and its thorns."(1)

The Islamists and the nationalists, on the other hand, shared a common concern for preserving an Islamic identity, as well as an awareness of the need to modernize as a prerequisite of the survival of the state. Their answers to this two-sided question, however, were very different from each other, as will be spelled out below.

The Islamists, in turn, can be subdivided into three groups : Islamic modernists, orthodox fundamentalists, and the proponents of a militant political Islam. The last tendency found its expression in the Muhammedan Union (Ittihad-i Muhammedi) led by Dervis Vahdeti. This group was forcibly suppressed by the Young Turks, because of its involvement in the counter-revolutionary "31 March Incident." The second group, the orthodox fundamentalists did not contribute significantly to the intellectual debate beyond repeating the familiar arguments. We will therefore, concentrate here on the ideas of the third group which we may call "Islamic modernists." Among the leading figures of this group were Sait Halim Pasa (prime minister from 1913 to 1916), poet Mehmet Akif, and Mehmet Semseddin (later Günaltay, prime minister in 1949-50).(2)

Regarding the compatibility of Islam and modernity, the Islamic modernists followed a line similar to that of Islamic modernists elsewhere. For example, Muhammad Abduh's teachings were well known among the Turkish Islamists, and Mehmet Akif, himself a leading Islamist, had translated into Turkish Abduh's pamphlet defending Islam against the attack of the French historian Hanotaux.(3)

In this view, there is no incompatibility between Islam, and

science, rationality, and progress. Islam is not an obstacle to progress; on the contrary, it is a factor of progress. It does not contain any superstitions incongruous with reason and nature. The source of the present backwardness of Islamic countries is not Islam as such, but ignorance, illegal innovations (**bid'a**), superstitious, obscurantism, and despotism. A return to the original purity of early Islam, an Islamic renaissance, would reopen the doors of **ijtihat** (individual reasoning) and remove all these obstacles on the way to progress. Muslims do not need to borrow anything from the West in the domain of morality, in which they are superior to the West. Europe's material superiority is due to its technology and economy. Such materials and methods can and should be borrowed from the West, however, so long as they are needed for economic development and they do not impinge upon the Islamic morality.(4)

This attitude can best be described as "limited rationalism." In contrast to rationalist philosophy in general, Islamic rationalism starts with the dogma (**nâs**) and attempts to deduce from it by means of rational reasoning. It presupposes the interpretation of the **nâs** (the Quran and the **hadith**) in such a way as to be compatible with the conclusions of modern science and with the changing needs of time and environment. But reason is free to operate only within the limits of the Quran and the **hadith.** Abduh, for example, defined the circumstances in which reason must act as interpreter as "matters in regard to which Quran is **hadith** give no clear guidance : because the text of the Quran is not clear; or because there are doubts about the authenticity of the **hadith**; or because Quran or **hadith** state only a general principle, not a particular ruling, or because both Quran and **hadith** are silent." While individual **ijtihat** is essential, "it cannot explain away what the Quran or **hadith** lay down, and if there is anything in them which seems incompatible with reason, it must either search for the real sense of the words or else submit itself to God and accept without understanding."(5)

The difficulty with this approach is that, like all kinds of eclecticism, it may emphasie either one of its components or the other. If the emphasis is on Islam, then the realm of rationality will be limited, especially in cases where the dogma is explicit and does not leave much room for interpretation. If, on the other hand, it leans more heavily on rationality, then "religion ceases to be properly religion and is transformed into a system of ethics or rules for successful conduct in this life, rather than a discipline preparatory of the last judgment and life hereafter."(6) Hourani similarly observes in his discussion of Abduh's rationalism, that "it is easy in this way to distort if not destroy the precise meaning of the Islamic concepts, to lose that which distinguished Islam from other religions and even from non-religious humanism... Without intending it, 'Abduh was perhaps opening the door to the flooding of Islamic doctrine and law by all the innovations of the modern world. He had intended to build a wall against secularism, he had in fact provided an easy bridge by which it could capture one position after another. It was not an accident that... one group of his disciples were later to carry his doctrines in the direction of complete secularism."(7) The Turkish Islamic modernists, however, did not carry their rationalism so far, and in much of their writings they followed a rather apologetic and defensive approach, not too different from that of the orthodox Islamists.

The same can be said about the Islamists' views on the relations between religion and the state. They opposed secularism on the grounds that Islam is a social religion which prescribes government. It canot be separated from the state; on the contrary, it is the foundation of, and regulates, the state. Islam and its rules are eternal; they are prior to the state and the society. Government is a religious, as well as rational, necessity. Therefore to separate religion from the state would be a "treacherous attempt." In an Islamic form of government, the source of sovereignty is of divine nature. Its exercice, however, is limited

by the principles of justice and consultation **(mesveret).** Thus, Islamists rejected absolutism as against both Islam and reason. All Muslims are under the obligation to revolt against an unjust ruler. Consequently, the Islamic principles of justice and consultation prevent absolutism and provide the most effective checks on the exercise of sovereignty. Obedience to the ruler is a religiously prescribed duty only insofar as the latter rules justly and in conformity with the **Sharia** and practises consultation. As long as these conditions are met, an Islamic government is compatible with either a republican or a monarchical form of government. Some Turkish Islamists, however, described the ideal Islamic form of government, "perfect Caliphate" **(hilâfet-i kâmile)**, as one in which the people would be entitled to choose one of its qualified members as Caliph who, in turn, would remain in office for life. While all Islamists favored a constitutional government, this in their view was not a government based on popular sovereignty and the supremacy of the legislature, but on the sovereignty of the **Sharia** presumably to be enforced by the rule of the **ulema.** The essence of constitutionalism was not popular participation in the making of laws, but was that the government, including the legislature, had no power to make and change laws without an authorization based on the **Sharia.**

Thus, Said Halim saw the parliament as "the source of all ills" and the constitution as "a blunder." In his view, "constitutionalism is one of the results of the erroneous ideas of achieving reform by making laws drawn from Europe. European constitutionalism will not work here... In Islamic society, the personal or functional prerogatives of a ruler does not mean absolutism, though they may mean it in the West." The Ottoman Constitution "is absolutely incompatible with the social and political conditions of the country as well as with the psychology and beliefs of the people." The Islamists also criticized the use of the word "legislation" **(tesri)** and "legislature." For them, to legislate was an exclusive prerogative of God. "To claim for His slaves the

legislative right belonging only to God is something that not even the Europeans have done."[8]

Finally, on the question of nationalism, the views of the Turkish Islamic modernists were far from being modern at all. They viewed nationalism as inherently un-Islamic and a threat to Islamic unity. Thus, said Mehmet Akif, "o, the community of Muslims, you are neither Arabs, nor Turks, nor Albanians, nor Kurds, nor Laz, nor Circassians. You are the members of only one nation, and that is the great nation of Islam. You cannot pursue the cause of nationalism unless you give up Islam; and you cease to be Muslims, as long as you pursue the cause of nationalism."[9] Another Islamist writer, Ahmed Naim, argued in the same vein that nationalism was a "foreign innovation as deadly to the body of Islam as cancer is to man... Turkishness was nothing but an artificial invention of the Turkists. There was no Turkish history apart from that of Islam."[10] Some other Islamists, however, attempted to reconcile Islam and nationalism: The age is the age of nationalism, they argued, and this cannot be helped. To bring together all Islamic nations under a single rule would be an impossible task in the twentieth century. What is feasible, therefore, is to attempt to establish a sort of Islamic confederation, an Islamic family of nations composed of different nationalities.[11]

We may conclude from this that the attitudes of the latter group toward nationalism displayed the same kind of confusions and inconsistencies we encounter in the ideas of Islamic modernists elsewhere. Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, for example, did not see any conflict between Islamic unity and local nationalism. "During his life Afghani was able to move back and forth in his appeals to local and Islamic 'nationalisms,' and it is quite possible that he was not aware of any contradiction between them — a contradiction that came out as a practical question only with the development of separate Arab and Turkish naionalisms

early in the twentieth century."[12] In fact, Ziya Gökalp reports that al-Afghani, during his stay in Istanbul, urged Mehmet Emin, who later became one of the foremost nationalist poets of his time, to write nationalistic poems in clear, intelligible, popular Turkish.[13] Similarly, no sign of Arab nationalism appears in Abduh's writings. Only it is with some writings of Rashid Rida that we may date the beginning of Arab nationalism.[14]

The second major current of opinion observed in the Young Turk era was Turkism. Although the first glimmerings of Turkish nationalism can be seen starting from the second half of the nineteenth century in the emergence of an intellectual interest in Turkish history (including pre-Islamic history), Turkish language, and folk literature, Turkism as a political doctrine became explicity only in the Young Turk period. Even the Young Turks did not pursue their nationalism vigorously in the first years of their power for fear of destroying the unity of the Empire. Instead, they favored Ottomanism which implied freedom and equality for all elements in the Empire, and was supposed to be based, regardless of race, religion, and language, on a common loyalty to the common homeland. It seems, however, that the concept "Ottomanism" was never taken seriously by non-Turkish Muslims and especially non-Muslim communities. After the loss of nearly all European provinces, populated largely by non-Muslim elements as well as Muslim Albanians at the Balkan War, and the growth of nationalist feelings among the Armenians and the Arabs, Turkish nationalism seemed to be the only realistic basis upon which a future Turkish state could be built. At the same time, the Young Turks' own efforts at administrative centralization with the aim of strengthening the state and their encouragement of the use of the Turkish language might have contributed to the nationalist and separatist feelings among non-Turkish populations.

Turkism, the chief intellectual architect of which was Ziya

Gökalp, also aimed at a synthesis of Turkish nationalism, Islam, and modernization, although their formula was very different from that of the Islamic modernists. One of the most widely known pamphlets of Gökalp bears the title **"Türklesmek, Islamlasmak, Muasirlasmak"** (Turkification, Islamization, Modernization). Gökalp saw no contradiction between Turkish nationalism and Islam, since they belonged to different realms, the former to the realm of nationality (**milliyet**), the latter to that of internationality (**beynelmilelliyet**). Nor does either of the two conflict with modernization. Modernization requires the adoption of Western science and technology. The satisfaction of moral needs, on the other hand, should be sought in national and religious sources. These three objectives can be pursued simultaneously provided that the domain of each is properly defined. Recognizing that there are but three different aspects of the same basic need, the Turkish nation should proceed with the construction of a "modern Islamic Turkism."

This passage, which seems to imply that the borrowing from the West should be limited to Western science and technology does not appear radically different from the views of the Islamic modernists. Gökalp immediately adds, however, that "for some time, contemporary civilization based on the development of modern tools and technology has been creating a new internationality on the basis of positive sciences. Internationalities based on religion are gradually being replaced by a genuine internationality based on science. The entry of Japan and Turkey into the community of European nations gave the European internationality a non-religious character; consequently, the realm of internationality and that of **umma** are being gradually separated from each other. Thus, today the Turkish nation is a society that belongs to the Ural-Altaic family, the Islamic **umma** and the European internationality."(15)

It may be concluded from his other writings that Gökalp

uses the term "internationality" as a point of reference to civilization. He says, in **The Foundatious of Turkism, that** "societies different from each other in culture and religion may share a common civilization. Just as cultural differences are no obstacle to the sharing of the same civilization, so people with different cultures and religions may belong to the same civilization. Thus, the Jews and the Japanese share the civilization of the European nations, even though they are different from them in religion and culture... civilization is something different from religion. Otherwise, there would not be any common institutions among people belonging to different religions... No civilization, therefore, can be related to a specific religion. Just as there is no Christian civilization, so there is no Islamic civilization."[16]

While Gökalp thus gives civilization a truly international content, he defines "culture," one of the central concepts in his teachings, in purely national terms. Culture, which is the basis of nationality, consists of feelings, emotions, judgments, and ideals peculiar to each nation, as opposed to rational and scientific knowledge, methods and technology which are considered as belonging to civilization.[17]

If civilization is international and non-religious and if culture is national and, again, non-religious, then what is the role assigned to Islam in defining the Turkish identity ? Gökalp is not very clear on this matter. His definition of a nation as "a society consisting of people who speak the same language, have had the same education and are united in their religious, moral and aesthetic ideals" does contain a religious element. But it is clear that he considers unity of language, culture, and ideals much more important than the unity of religion. It is difficult not to agree with Heyd that "in Gökalp's synthesis of Turkish culture and Western civilization there is no proper place for Islam as a third element. As far as Islam belongs to the sphere of civiliza-

tion it has to be superseded by modern European values. Most of its 'cultural' elements should, if Gökalp were consistent, be regarded as part of Arab or Persian national culture, which should not be accepted by the Turks... His 'religious Turkism' is one of the weakest points in his programme... Gökalp's system does not allow religion any separate existence... (T)he Islamic element in Turkish life, as an independent factor of major importance was from the beginning vague and unconvincing and was necessitated mainly by the structure of the Ottoman Empire. With the dissolution of this empire, Islam gradually lost its value in Gökalp's teachings and became the junior partner in his trinity."[18]

The relatively minor role assigned to Islam in Gökalp's teachings can also be deduced from his "Islamization" program, which consists of the following items : (a) the preservation of the Arabic script common to all Islamic peoples; (b) to organize terminology congresses to create a common and unified scientific terminology among Islamic peoples; (c) to organize pedagogical congresses with the purpose of establishing a common system of education; (d) to create permanent communication links among the **mufti** (juriconsult) establishments of all Islamic countries; (e) to preserve the sanctity of the "crescent" as the symbol of the Islamic community.[19] This modest program clearly indicates that what Gökalp meant by Islamization was no more than maintaining certain cultural links among different Islamic nations, with no implications of a political, even cultural unity.

Another major difference between Gökalp and the Islamic modernists is found in their attitudes toward the compatibility of Islam and modern Western civilization based on rational and scientific thinking. Gökalp did not see any possibility for such a conflict, not because he saw Islam, as the Islamic modernists did, as an entirely rational religion, but because he thought that

religion and civilization occupied completely different domains. Religion concerns only the sacred institutions, faith, and religious rituals; all other institutions, including scientific concepts, technology, and aesthetic rules are parts of a separate, non-religious domain.[20] This distinction gave Gökalp's thoughts a clearly secular character in contrast to those of the Islamic modernists who were fundamentally opposed to secularism. Furthermore, his separation of religious and secular domains made him much less insistent about the adoption of Western institutions. In fact he criticized the Tanzimat reformers for having borrowed only some elements of Western and Eastern civilization. They did not realize, according to Gökalp, that "the two contrasting civilizations based on entirely different principles could not possibly be reconciled. Dualisms that still exist in our political structure are the result of this mistake : two kinds of court, two kinds of school, two kinds of taxation, two kinds of budget, two kinds of law."[21] Turks, therefore, should adopt Western civilization in its entirety. This does not mean the loss of either their national culture, nor their religion.

Gökalp's and other Turkists' contribution to the old controversy over secularization was that they, instead of concentrating on the secularization of the state, turned their attention to a novel subject, namely the secularization of religion. For Gökalp, that part of the **Sharia** which regulates social relationships (muamelât), as opposed to matters of faith **(itikâdat)** and ritual **(ibâdat)**, derived from the social practices **(urf)** of the Muslim community and was given sanction by the sacred texts **(nâss)**. "With the change in social life, however the **urf** changed and so did the relation of the **nâss** to the **urf**... The entire question of religious reform, therefore, consisted of taking measures to make religion a matter of conscience while subjecting the legal aspects of Islam to secular legislation. The first was the concern of the men of religion and the religious institutions, while the latter was a job for the state."[22]

It can be seen from the preceding discussion that there are significant similarities between the ideas of Gökalp and the reforms of Kemal Ataturk. Heyd argues that "Gökalp's teaching form an indispensable link between the ideology of the Young Turks... and Ataturk's regime... Gökalp can claim to have laid the theoretical foundations for the modern Turkish state."[23] We may conclude that in the crucial years of the Second Constitutionalist period, the views of the Islamists failed to fire the imagination of Turkish educated classes because of their essentially negative attitude toward nationalism and their reluctance to accept all implications of rationalism. In an age of nationalism and positivism, they could not be expected to provide the philosophical bases of a new Turkish State. Consequently, Turkish nationalism rapidly gained ascendancy in the course of the Young Turk era and became the dominant doctrine of the Kemalist Republic.

NOTES

1. Cited in Bernard Lewis, **The Emergence of Modern Turkey** (London, 1968), p. 236.

2. See, for example, Said Halim, **Buhran-i Içtimaimiz** (Istanbul, 1332); **Islamlasmak** (Istanbul, 1337); M. Semseddin, **Zulmetten Nura** (Istanbul, 1311); Musa Kazim, **Külliyat-i Seyhülislam Musa Kazim** (Istanbul. 1336). For a detailed analysis of the Islamists' ideas, see Tarik Z. Tunaya, **Islamcilik Cereyani** (Istanbul, 1962).

3. **Hanoto'nun Hücumuna Karsi Seyh Muhammed Abduh' un Islami Müdafaasi** (Darülhilâfe, 1331).

4. Tunaya, **op. cit.**, pp. 12-20, 69-77.

5. Albert Hourani, **Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939** (London, 1970), p. 147. Bassam Tibi similarly observes that the thoughts of the Islamic reformers remained "within the bounds set by Islamic dogma... The postulated synthesis of dogma and ratio remains a postulate; it is unattainable; "Islam and Social Change in the Modern Middle East," **Law and State**, 22 (1980), pp. 98, 100.

6. Sylvia G. Haim, **Arab Nationalism : An Anthology** (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964), p. 18.

7. Hourani, **op. cit.**, pp. 144-45; on Abduh's more secularist disciples, see **ibid.**, ch. 7.

8. Niyazi Berkes, **The Development of Secularism in Turkey** (Montreal, 1964), pp. 370-72. William Zartman succintly summarizes the classical Islamic attitude toward legislation : According to the classical Islamic theory of the state, "the ruler cannot be but the judge and the administrator ; his power can be executive, administrative, and judicial, but not legislative... God alone is the Great Legislator, since he has already given the Law **(sharia)**, divine, perfect, sufficient,

unchangeable, written in the Koran for eternity in the last revelation necessary for humanity. Therefore, there is neither place nor need for a legislating state, and governing is not a process of legislation, but of administration and interpretation... The ruler is neither the creation nor the creator of the Law, but its instrument."

"Pouvoir et Etat dans l'Islam," **Pouvoirs** (1980), No. 12, p. 6.

9. Mehmet Akif, "Tefsir-i Serif," **Sabilürresad,** 1328, No. 16, quoted by Tunaya, **op. cit.,** p. 80, no. 1.

10. Quoted by Berkes, **op. cit.,** pp. 374-75.

11. Tunaya, **op. cit.,** pp. 83-84.

12. Nikki R. Keddie; **Sayyid Jamel al-Dîn al-Afghanî: A Political Biography** (Berkeley, 1972), p. 64.

13. Ziya Gökalp, **Türkçülügün Esaslari,** Varlik edition, Istanbul 1963, p. 8 (First printing 1923).

14. Haim, **op. cit.,** pp. 18-19; Hourani, **op. cit.,** pp. 299-306.

15. Ziya Gökalp, **Türklesmek, Islâmlasmak, Muasirlasmak,** Inkilap Kitabevi, Istanbul n.d., pp. 12-13 (First printing 1918).

16. Gökalp, **Türkçülügün Esaslari,** pp. 36, 39.

17. Uriel Heyd, **Foundations of Turkish Nationalism** (London, 1950) p. 63.

18. Ibid., pp. 150-51.

19. Gökalp, **Türklesmek, Islâmlasmek, Muasirlasmak,** p. 34.
20. Gökalp, Türkçülügün Esaslari, p. 38.
21. Ibid., p. 44.
22. Berkes, **op. cit.** pp. 381-83.

23. Heyd, **op. cit.,** p. 170; see also, Ercüment Kuran, **Atatürkçülük Uzerine Denemeler** (Ankara, 1981) pp. 5-9, 63-68).

CULTURAL INNOVATION IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL ISLAMIC MIDDLE EAST AS A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

Bassam Tibi (West Germany)

During the past decade social scientists have concentrated on the problems of economic growth in Third World societies and have overlooked the fact that social change also includes cultural innovations. Analysis of the whole societal context also frequently went by the board in the study of the development process; scholars concentrated on partial aspects of society and the changes occurring there, without placing these micro-investigations in their overall social context.

Lately there have been signs of more awareness among social scientists that cultural innovations must be studied in the framework of macrosociological analyses. The sociologist Eisenstadt is one of a number of leading revisionist North American modernization theorists who adopt a macrosociological approach in the European tradition to problems of social change.(1)

In this paper, my starting point is that in contemporary world society the countries of the Islamic Middle East form part of the underdeveloped regions of the Third World and I enquire into the type of change required for these countries to develop their structures. In this context I refer to Eisenstadt's theory(2) to see whether it can help us to understand and analyse the processes of social change taking place in the Islamic Middle East. It is not, however, possible to consider all aspects of Eisenstadt's theory in a paper of this length. In view of the fact that it is being presented to an Islamic conference I should like to discuss the role which Eisenstadt attributes to the Reformation movement in the process of social change. Here I am thinking of the importance which the Lutheran Reformation had in European

development which the Islamic modernist Afghani considers a model. I should also like to pose the question whether the Lutheran Reformation alone brought about the other social-structural phenomena and thereby gained in force. The guiding thread throughout is what meaning these processes might have for Islamic society today.

1. Underdevelopment and cultural traditions.

Although the product of American socialisation, Eisenstadt is a scholarly sociologist in the European sense, familiar with the philosophical origins of modern sociology. To them he also traces the doctrine of a universal tendency to develop in history (evolutionism), (3) which comes into its own modern sociology.

The notions of macrosociological analysis which were central in classical sociology get suppressed, above all in the USA, in favour of microsociological research. Only in the fifties and sixties can one observe a rapidly increasing interest in macro-sociological enquiry undoubtedly, related to the new significances of those preindustrial regions known today as the "Third World". Even today analyses of a whole social context tend to be found more frequently in the sociology of development than in analyses of industrial societies which are predominantly microsociological.

For Eisenstadt development studies are nowadays closely connected with sociological research into social change which is his main concern. From the modernisation theory paradigm he borrows the concepts of tradition and modernity and attempts to use them as analytical concepts with which to explain social change. His criticism of the earlier modernisation theory paradigm is principally that it affords "no explanation of how modern societies can emerge from pre-modern societies" (4), particularly since the preconditions for the emergence of modern societies are

described precisely with the concepts and features of those same societies.

The notion of transitory society, a transitional phase between modern and traditional society, does not solve this question. The paradigm operates with ideal types, all of which are oriented towards a particular type of society, namely industrial society; it is incapable of explaining social change as a process. In Thomas Kuhn's theory [5] of science this analytical gap might be described as a central **anomaly** in modernisation theory. Unsolved anomalies lead, in this view, to a crisis of the paradigm during which its adherents "think up numerous clarifications and ad-hoc modifications of their theory in order to get rid of any apparant conflict" [6]. Eisenstadt proceeds in similar fashion. He tries to save the paradigm by building into it "the variety of forms and differences in modernisation" as well as "the possible breakdowns" [7].

Backward societies have underdeveloped social structures. Eisenstadt thinks this underdevelopment is traditionality, which may be overcome by modernisation, and in this he remains true to traditional modernisation theory. He doubts only whether unilinear development is possible after the takeoff phase, because "the decisive problem of these societies (lies)... not in the relatively low level of modernisation, but rather in the inability to develop a new institutional framework and in the lack of regulating mechanism and norms..." which could account for the fact that paths of development are not single-tracked but "different" and "variously formed" [8].

Analysis of the socio-cultural dimension of traditionality remains central. Yet to investigate it alone as the substance of underdevelopment means mistaking a single, albeit important, dimension of a social phenomenon, for the whole.

One particularly interesting aspect of this question is to what extent a culture may hinder or promote social change. Here Eisenstadt discusses the thesis that the Protestant ethic is an economic ethic and that it alone determined social change; after an extensive discussion of Weber he concludes that the Protestant ethic coincided with other social factors and that this explains why it worked such changes as it did; he quite clearly discards the thesis that the Protestant ethic alone could have taken effect as a modernisation movement. This debate is of particular interest for the Islamic cultural area and is worth elucidating further.

II. Religion and social change

The significance of religious organisations and the relationship between politics, society and religion play a central part in Eisenstadt's work. Weber's interpretation of the Protestant ethic and the related discussion of it by historians and sociologists of religion are the main concern — a revival to be explained by the renewed importance attributed to Weber in the sociology of social change. From this point of view sociologists have brought the value of the Weberian framework for the study of Islam into focus.[9] Eisenstadt's points out : "As interest grew in the past fifteen years in the development and modernisation of non-European countries, so also did Weber's thesis regain people's attention. In the presence or lack of an equivalent to the Protestant ethic, many people saw the key to understanding the success or failure of modernisation in non-European countries".[10]

Here I should like to stress that Moslem thinkers explain the backwardness of the Islamic Middle East as due to the lack of such an ethic. Only in a religious movement, like that of the Reformation, and in a reformer, like Luther, who could found a new Islamic ethic, do Islamic modernists of the nineteenth century see a way out of backwardness into modernity.

Afghani (1839-1897), the rector spiritus of contemporary Islamic modernism whose influence began in the second half of the nineteenth century, wrote in one of his early writings : "When we reflect on the causes of Europe's revolutionary transition from a barbarian state to civilization, we can see that this change was only possible through the religious movement initiated and led by Luther... He managed to move Europeans to adopt a new reformed outlook...'[11]

Eisenstadt's references to the relationship between religion and social change strike me as valuable because they contain highly successful strands of analysis. Particularly worth quoting is one paragraph which acts as a corrective to the Islamic modernist Afghani's view, just cited, that the traditionality of the Islamic Middle East might be overcome by a religious revival movement[12] on the lines of the Lutheran model :

"The Reformation was originally, of course, not a modernisation movement. It had no modernising impulse but was concerned rather to set up a new, purely medieval socio-political-religious order. Originally Protestantism was indeed a religious movement which, as such, sought to restructure the world. However, since Protestantism contained at the same time strong impulses related to this world, these impulses mingled from the start with the main socio-political, economic and cultural trends of European societies towards the end of the seventeeth century, namely with the development of capitalism, the Renaissance states, absolutism, secularity and science..."[13]

Properly speaking, this paragraph ought also to be a corrective to Eisenstadt's own assessment of cultural value orientation as the motor of social change. The text establishes quite clearly that a religious ethic can only have a decisive effect on social change when it coincides with other socio-political and also

socio-economic conditions. The mesh of outlooks and socio-economic development in a given totality has to be examined by the macro-sociologist, if any substantial conclusions are to be drawn. One example of a successful attempt to accomplish this is the analysis by the French sociologist of religion, Maxime Rodinson. of the foundation of Islam.([14]) Eisenstadt hints at the way an economic ethic can effect society, but always allows cultural value orientations to predominate in his principal statements.

Eisenstadt's cultural determination of traditional society as one which defines itself and is conditioned by tradition, strikes me as useful, although this is clearly only one dimension of the phenomenon of underdevelopment and one which does not grasp the whole issue. If one remains on this socio-cultural level of the debate, then religion can be seen to be one of the central ingredients of traditionality.

In traditional societies religion has not yet been secularized;([15]) it is a part of the socio-cultural and political order. Religious leaders see their task as one of "formalizing and formulating their beliefs and their tradition in such a way that they can be fully articulated and organized on a relatively differenciated cultural level."([16])

Part and parcel of this embodiment in organizational forms is both the forestalling of any kind of intellectualisation of religiosity and the binding of religion to the state as the legitimization of the political power. For traditional religious leaders saw "in free, religious activity... a threat to political loyalty"([17]) Eisenstadt realizes how difficult it is to arrive at universally valid statements through generalization and for that reason adduces modifying empirical illustrations of his thesis.

III. Conclusions

To me, however, it seems extremely dubious to make statements in the sociology of religion which are supposed to be equally valid for monotheist religions like Islam and other forms of religion like those of the Sassanites and the ancient Chinese. All these religions are treated as empires. Monotheist religions have, as I have shown elsewhere[18], a different social function.

Obviously Eisenstadt is not totally familiar with the empirical reality he cites to illustrate his observations, and this leads him to some substantial mistakes. In the section on Islam he refers to the formation of sects "whose aim it was to destroy the existing regime and set up a new, religiously pure and true order... the religious control of political authority was ineffective"[19]. The truth is that there were two forms of sect formation in Islam : one for which Eisenstadt's statement is valid and another which aimed apolitically at the establishment of a religious inwardness. The latter were the mystical sects of the brotherhoods in Sufi-Islam which gave rise to a long-lasting tradition in Islam[20].

Eisenstadt's statements about the relationship between religion, society and political rule in a pre-industrial society retain, nevertheless, their centrality.

These reflections lead us to the conclusion that cultural innovations are a key of social change, even if alone they cannot cause a society to be transformed into a higher level of development; to take full effect, they have to coincide with other social and economic factors, as we have seen in the case of the Lutheran Reformation and the emergence of the Protestant ethic.

Eisenstadt's observations are only applicable to current pro-

blems in the contemporary Islamic Middle East after a certain amount of modification. The modern Middle East is structurally underdeveloped and its culture is also traditional. But it is not the cultural traditionality which is the cause of underdevelopment, which in turn is not reducible to a socio-economic structure. (21) In other words : the Islamic Middle East today needs renewing culturally, a process which involves, among other things, a modern understanding of Islamic culture. It could consist in a separation, in modern societies, of religions from politics, with the former continuing to exist as a religious and social ethic. But cultural innovations alone are not sufficient to overcome underdevelopment. Cultural innovations must fit into a development strategy embracing all spheres of society. Islam's contribution to this process could lie in its being freed from cultural traditionality while being preserved as an ethic for Muslims, as a part of inwardness. (22)

FOOTNOTES

1. See the reader of Wolfgang Zapf (ed.), Theorien des sozialen Wandels, Köln-Berlin 1970[2].

2. S.N. Eisenstadt, Tradition, Change and Modernity, New York/London 1973; German Edition, Tradition, Wandel und Modernität, Frankfurt : M. 1979.

3. Concerning the tradition of evolutionism see Gérard Leclerc Anthropologie et Colonialisme, Paris 1972.

4. Eisenstadt, op. cit., pp. 48f.

5. See Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1970.

6. Ibid.

7. Eistenstadt, op. cit., p. 55.

8. Ibid., pp. 92f.

9. See Bryan S. Turner, Weber and Islam, London 1974.

10. Eisenstadt, op. cit., p. 237.

11. Gamal ad-Din al-Afghani, al-'amal al-Kamilah (Collected essays in one volume) ed. M. 'Ammara, Cairo 1968, p. 328.

12. See B. Tibi, Arab Nationalism. A Critical Enquiry, London-New York, esp. chapter "Two Forms of Islamic Revival", pp. 62ff.

13. Eisenstadt, op. cit., pp. 242f.

14. See Maxime Rodinson, Mohammed, Paris 1975 and my review article in : Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophy, vol. 64 (1978) pp. 547-556.

15. Concerning this general issue see the reader Donald E. Smith, Religion, Politics and Social Change in the Third World, New York 1971 and also his : Religion and Political Modernization, New Haven 1974; with reference to Islam see B. Tibi, "Islam and Social Change in the Modern Middle East", in : Law and State, vol. 22 (1980), pp. 91-106.

16. Eisenstadt, op. cit., p. 206.

17. Ibid., p. 208.

18. See B. Tibi, Die Krise des modernen Islam, C.H. Beck-Press, Munich 1981, § 4, pp. 76 ff.

19. Eisenstadt, op. cit. pp. 221.

20. See R.A. Nichelson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism, Cambridge 1980[4].

21. B. Tibi, "Unterentwicklung als kulturelle Traditionalitäl ? Eisenstadts Beitrag zur makrosoziologischen Forschung" in: Soziologische Revue, vol. 3 (1980), pp. 121-131.

22. This view has been developed in my paper delivered to the First Islamic Coference on Islam and Civilization (Cairo, 9-22 November 1979). See B. Tibi, "Islam and Secularization. Religion and the Functional Differentiation of the Social System"., in : Archives de Philosophie du Droit et de Philosophie Sociale, vol. 66 (1980), pp. 207-222.

EARLY ISLAM — AN EXAMPLE OF CHALLENGED RELIGION

Peter Antes (West Germany)

Since modern science and technology have come to the Islamic world, the theologians have felt challenged and adopted different attitudes towards their methods and results.(1) Some of them such as al-Afghani (d. 1897), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), Rashid Rida (d. 1935) and others thought that Islam was an open-minded religion and therefore its dogmatic positions could not be contradicted by scientific or historical knowledge. If there was an obvious contradiction between both sayings it meant to them that further investigation was needed in order to reconcile the revealed truth with what has scientifically been discovered. These theologians, thus, claimed for a radical rethinking of traditional theology so that the Islamic creed would find a new expression that should still be in the line of the Quranic message but suitable as well for the Western trained scientist.

Other Muslims, however, rejected that attempt of rethinking theology. They, instead, tried to look backwards, glorifying the beginnings of Islam under Muhammad and the first four caliphs. And they said that because the modern scientific approach did not guide theological research at that time it was not allowed to take it into consideration at present either and this in particular because of its so called "methodological atheism". The consequences of such a position were a complete rejection or denial of any new methodological proceeding and for the believer that in the case of divergent statements he has to make the choice whether he wants to obey God and His revelation or subscribe to the views of Western universities.

These two entirely different reactions are not typical for Islam alone. We also find the same kinds of thinking in modern

Hinduism and Buddhism and even within modern Christianity. The problem of fundamentalism is still under debate. It is true that in Islam the Quran is unchangeable and requires an unconditioned acceptance from those who believe it to be God's message revealed word by word to Muhammad without any expressive contribution of the latter. Belief in the Quran, however, does not necessarily mean that in the present challenge of Islam all the traditional positions in Islamic law, dogmatics, exegesis, politics, economics, social conduct and so on are unchangeable as well and that no new methodological approach could be accepted. And this itself is not a theological position similar to the first one mentioned above, but it is based on what really happened in history, namely in the first centuries of the Hijra.

1. Law

The first striking example is the development that led to the systematization of Islamic law. W. Montgomery Watt, in his famous book "The Formative Period of Islamic Thought", summarizes that process in these words :

"In the ancient schools of law — to follow the ideas of Joseph Schacht and others — religious-minded men in each city criticized local legal practice in the light of Qur'anic rules. In course of time they reached a measure of agreement on what was in accordance with Qur'anic or Islamic principles. This constituted what Schacht calls 'the living tradition of the school', that is, of Medina or Kufa or some other city. On the one hand, this represented the consensus (**ijma'**) of the scholars in that city, though it might differ from the views held in other cities. On the other hand, the living tradition was regarded as **sunna** or 'standard practice', and assumed to be continuous with the practice of the first Muslims. In so far as the scholars were critical of the Umayyad administrators — and they often were — the **sunna** was not actual practice, but an idealized practice. For

long the continuity of the practice was simply assumed. Then in the later Umayyad period we find, for example, that Hammad ibn-Abi-Sulayman (d. 738) of Kufa ascribed the views held in Kufa at this time to his own teacher, Ibrahim an-Nakha'i (d.c. 714). It was also claimed, however, that Ibrahim received these views from earlier scholars, called jointly 'the Companions of Ibn-Mas'ud'; and finally the views were ascribed to Ibn-Mas'ud himself, the chief of the Companions of Muhammad who settled in Kufa. The last step in this process was to assert that the **sunna** was the **sunna** of the Prophet.

The phrase "the **sunna** of the Prophet" had been much used in the past, especially by political leaders claiming a religious basis for their activity. Thus even the heretical al-Harith ibn-Surayj summoned men to the Book of God and the **sunna** of the Prophet. Because the phrase was widely used it had ceased to have a very precise meaning, and stood for whatever any group or even individual considered to be true Islamic teaching."[2]

It is worth noting in this context that the consensus **(ijma')** and the **sunna** of the Prophet were both introduced as additional sources for Islamic law if the Quran did not help to find the right answer.[3] And last but not least the **ijtihad** (investigation) should also be mentioned. Among all these sources the Quran itself has always held the highest rank of authority and was considered somehow to be guideline for all use of source material but it is still a matter of fact — and this is of particular interest here — that from the earliest times after Muhammad it has never been the only source for the Islamic community except — according to the Sunni tradition — for some heretics.

This shows clearly that Early Islam unlike some conservative modern tendencies referred to above was open-minded enough to handle the existing problems in the field of law within other

methods than phrases of the Quran alone. A comparative study would even prove that many regulations are also found in the Roman-Byzantine legislation and other legal codes of that time. The specialists in Islamic law, the fukaha', indeed followed to a large extent what was common legal practice and made use of it without having been anxious about its non-Islamic origin in many cases.

2. Dogmatics

The development of Islamic theology shows the tendency mentioned before even more clearly. We realize that many theological schools such as the Mu'tazilites or the Ash'arites based their argumentation not only on the Quran but also and for central questions on Greek philosophy[4], known through intellectual contacts with "hommes de lettres" in the conquered lands. It is significant that thus Aristotelian logic gained such an importance that even where those philosophical positions were fighted against for the benefit of Quranic convictions Greek kinds of argumentation were still used. One of the best historical examples in the Middle Ages is al-Ghazali's (d. 1111) "Tahafut al-falasifa". The famous theologian argues in this book against those who reject miracles. His own position is expressed by a theory saying that God creates the world anew at any moment and therefore what seems to be a miracle for us, is nothing else in God's view but a simple change of His usual creative attitude (khark al-'ada).[5] The whole procedure shows that al-Ghazali obviously felt the need of a logically consistent theory. He did not simply deny the right to ask those philosophical questions but he refused to follow the suggested answer and proposed the Ash'arite dogmatic position instead. The debate, however, was still open because later on, Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) known as Averroes in Europe rejected al-Ghazali's positions in his famous "Tahafut at-tahafut".

A very brief look at the index of the handbooks in Islamic

theology and philosophy suffices to make clear how often even the most conservative and rigid thinkers have referred to Aris-totle, Plato and other great names of Greek philosophy. Greek logic has thus become the guiding principle for every kind of systematization. The philosophical approach was then so much in the line of the academic world around the Mediterranean Sea that those books once translated into Latin also took immediately the Lead in European universities. Monneret de Villard has convincingly pointed out how important Arabic studies therefore were in Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries.[8]

It was the original rethinking of Greek philosophy in the light of Monotheism and the Revelation of the Quran that made Muslim philosophy and theology so attractive to the Christians. The writings of St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) are proof enough to say that the Commentator, namely Averroes, and others, in particular Avicenna (= Ibn Sina, d. 1037) and Algazel (= al-Ghazali) had nearly the same authority as Aristotle himself. Large parts of scholastic theology, known as the treatise "De Deo Uno" (The One God) in Christian dogmatics, are very similar to their Islamic prototypes. Both, the Christian and the Islamic handbooks sum up a great deal of philosophical and scientific knowledge of their times, using the secular methods in order to show its theological impact in the light and through the interpretation of the creed.

Muslims and Christians, then, were deeply convincted that the word of God is not contradicted by scientific research and if it looks as such, a great misunderstanding must be the cause and needs to be corrected through better information or a new and more aprpopriate understanding of what was believed to be the truth. As far as I can see the theologians of the first centuries of Islam have always been ready to open the debate on new issues put forward by men who referred to ideas, theories and methods from non-Islamic sources.

3. Exegesis

This principle has also been true in exegesis though one might argue that it has somehow been rejected by the classical position known as that of bila kayf([7]) and which is saying that one is not allowed to ask how contradictory concepts in the Quran can be logically reconciled. This extreme position, however, expresses the need of letting the logical contradictions aside what precisely shows that the latter is still felt as such. How sophisticated the arguments might have been they did not make people cease to think that there is a logical contradiction existing.

Apart from this example we see that the Muslims made large use of all kinds of methodological approach to the Quran. Philology was highly appreciated and widely developed. Pre-Islamic poetry was made one of the main sources for the right understanding of only vaguely perceivable sentences or expressions in the Quran. Lexicography and grammar continuously refer to typical verses of that poetry trying to make thus clear what the Quran originally intended to say. The Tafsir of at-Tabari (d. 923) is an illustrious example of that kind. Tabari did not hesitate to embrace in his commentary all methods that gave him a chance of better understanding of the Quran.

The abrogations in the Quran, finally, made historical studies necessary and led to a rough chronological order of the Surahs. Up to now the printed text of the Quran refers to that historical framework by telling us whether the surah has been revealed in Mekka or in Medina. It does not seem unconceivable to me that in those chronological studies the scholars of the past would have applied modern hermeneutics and exegetical methods if they had known them at that time. The way of procedure and the methods to handle the problems do not show the slightest doubt or hesitation in picking up non-Islamic methods. None of the methods used has been taught by the Quran itself. They were introduced be-

cause they fulfilled the promise to lead to a better understanding of the Quran and one was sure that those methods satisfied the intellectual exigences of the surrounding academic milieu. They were part of the contemporary hermeneutics used for both, the secular and the religious texts. A comparative study would show that here again the Muslims did not differ from their Jewish or Christian contemporaries. They all applied these methods to their religious texts as well, respectively to the Quran and to the Bible, and by doing so they never intended to make a secular text out of the holy one. They simply did so because of their conviction that such an approach would inspire the understanding of the revealed message. The methods that were made to understand language as such were also thought to be valid for God's Word. If this were not the case, the Word of God would lose its language-based character.

Hundreds or thousands of examples in the texts of Islamic tradition could be given here to show that secular methods have largely been used in Islamic law, dogmatics and exegesis. I did not quote them because the texts are well known but they need to be reread in the light of the general thesis of the paper that says : from the first times after Muhammad's death onwards the Muslims made great use of contemporary scientific methods in order to explain the creed in the light of the scientific and hermeneutical approaches put forward by Muslims and non-Muslims. The need for such a rethinking of the original creed was felt when Islam was confronted with well established theories and elaborated theologies in many parts of the newly conquered lands. Their highly developed civilization with their long intellectual tradition of the best Greek philosophers meant an enormous challenge for the "religion of the desert". The Muslims answered by utilizing the main issues of the challengers themselves. They articulated their fundamental religious convictions in a language accessible to non-Muslims as well. They succeeded in expressing their message on such a high intellectual level that they alone

were privileged to be the heirs of the Greeks. It's from the Arabs the Christians have learnt philosophy and Greek science, both in accordance with monotheistic interpretations and thus brought a step forward towards the reconciliation between belief and university studies of non religious traditions.

History tells us that this particular function of the Arabs has ceased to be decisive in modern times. Whereas the original Arabic thought has been confronted with new challenges in Europe and has been considerably transformed, the Arabs themselves handed it down from generation to generation in its medieval shape. More and more they have apparently lost the capacity of rethinking those thoughts. Repetition has hindered them from being on the same level as their medieval were. Many modern discussions therefore are not only in conflict with some issues of the modern world, they would not be appreciated by the representatives of the great Islamic traditions at their lifetimes either. The challenge of the modern world to Islam is consequently twofold : it wants the Muslims as intellectually mature as great representatives in history were, and it expects them to be so open-minded to react by adopting a good deal of modern knowledge and methods as those in the past did. The study of the formative period of Islamic thought — to quote Watt's title once again — is therefore the most instructive and highly encouraging example for the present-day challenge. The example shows that neither fear and resignation nor a radical denial of the challenge have any chance of long lasting success.

The Muslims of the past I referred to above were at once good believers and representatives of their times including the whole intellectual impact of those times. As often as this unity between religion and the intellectual level of a particular time was in danger of getting lost, religion became rigid and lost its superiority and attractiveness. The great periods of Islam were those where the unity was strong.

The present paper tried to limit the argumentation to the fields of law, dogmatics and exegesis. It did not include the much wider fields of politics, economics and social conduct. It is obvious that there again very different attitudes can be found if one compares one region with the other or one period with another. Many so called "good and old traditions" are thus being discovered as being younger or less general than expected. In particular in the realm of upbringing and education lots of novels of the past tell us that many things did not exist of which we think that they were of an everlasting tradition. The study of history therefore is very important. It shows what the authentic traditions are. Moreover it makes our contemporary Muslims more willing to answer new challenges because we are being taught how great men mastered similar situations in the past.

NOTES

1. Cf. Siegrun Kapferer: Die Moslembruderschaft. Nativistische Reaktion und Religiöse Revitalisierung im Prozess der Akkulturation, phil. Diss. Heidelberg 1972 p. 72ss and 95ss.

2. W. Montgomery Watt : The Formative Period of Islamic Thought, Edinburgh 1973, p. 256s.

3. Cf. Ignas Goldziher : Vorlesungen über den Islam, Heidelberg, 2nd ed. 1925; Y. Linant de Bellefonds : Law, in Arthur J. Arberry (Ed.) : Religion in the Middle East. Three Religions in Concord and Conflict, II (Cambridge 1969) p. 413-458 ; Saîd Ramadan : Dass islamische Recht. Theorie und Praxis, Wiesbaden 1980 p. 41ss.

4. Cf. the respective passages in Louis Gardet/M.-M. Anawati: Introduction à la théologie musulmane. Essai de théologie comparée, Paris 1948 and Louis Gardet : Dieu et la destinée de l'homme, Paris 1967.

5. Cf. Peter Antes : Prophetenwunder in der As'ariya bis al-Gazali (Algazel), Freiburg i Br. 1970 p. 47ss and 83ss.

6. Uge Monneret de Villard : Lo Studio dell'Islam in Europa nel XII e nel XIII secolo, Città del Vaticano 1944 (Studi e Testi 110).

7. Cf. Gardet/Anawati, op. cit. p. 477.

POETICAL LIES AND POETICAL TRUTH

Some philosophical aspects in the poetic tradition of Islam.

J. C. Bürgel (West Germany)

The place of poetry and poetics in Greek philosophy is well-known Whereas Aristotle gave it a high regard and discussed some of its features — mainly those of the tragedy — in his poetics, Plato was sceptical and suspicious of it, regarding it as the shade of shades, meaning the imitation or image of something which in itself is only a meek reflection of the reality which according to him is the world of ideas.

Whereas Aristotle allowed lying, Plato wanted the poet to be a propagator of truth instrumental to the education of youth in an ideal state. Both, however, agreed that poetry had something to do with the divine, that poets were ecstatics, or inspired by the Muses. However, Aristotle, always more practical and more sober than Plato, emphasized the artistic aspects, saw poetry much more as a craft and the poet as a craftsman than Plato would be inclined to do.

This is why Aristotle is usually being looked at as the father of all poetic schools considering art as based on rules that are learnable and applicable by every intelligent man, whereas Plato is being looked at as the father of the school of inspired poetry, attainable for the initiated only. Similarly, those who understand poetry as an art based on learnable rules are more concerned with imitating nature and visible things or with using poetry as a political means, whereas inspired poets feel the vocation of conveying veiled meanings, superior or interior truth.

In one of his articles Gustav von Grunebaum made the point

that Arabic poets were, in general, more in the Aristotelian line, whereas Persian poets were usually more in the wake of Plato.

This is certainly true, as far as the interest in inner or esoteric meaning is at stake. As for the artistic rules, however, Persian poetry soon tried to outdo their Arab colleagues by applying the most difficult rules and producing the most sophisticated patterns of style.

If we look at the history of poetics in Islam, we find that Arab writers on poetics emphasize innate talent (طبع) and acquirred knowledge or art (صنعة) as being the two principle requisites for becoming a good poet.

If this is to be regarded as an Aristotelian element, another one is even more so, though not noticed by von Grunebaum. It is the element of untruth or, as Arabic books on poetics usually call it كذب lie, in poetry.

The famous slogan خير الشعر اكذبه — "The more lies a poem contains, the better it is !" — was ascribed to Greek philosophy or even to Aristotle himself by Arab writers, such as Qudama b. Ga'far in his Naqd ash-shi'r. Commentators of Aristotle in late antiquity seem to be more responsible for this ascription than Aristotle himself, by making of poetry the art of false argumentation. As is well known to historians of philosophy, they gave it, together with rhetorics, a place in the organon on the grounds, that both rhetorics and poetics were ways of arguing based on different kinds of syllogisms or conclusions, like the other forms of speech, such as apodictic and dialectic and so on. The difference was in the amount of truth contained in the premises. If there was only truth in them, the conclusion was an apodictic assertion, if there was no truth at all, it was a poetic assertion. This division was taken over by Farabi in his "Treatise

on the Rules of the Art of Poetry". Later on he revised it in another treatise, emphasizing the didactic value of poetry for people trained in philosophical argumentation. Nevertheless, the verdict of untruthfulness now being linked with the names of the First and the Second Teacher had its repercussions throughout the poetic tradition of the Islamic Middle Ages, all the more so, since it got religious support from the Koran and the Hadith. At the end of the 26th Surah the poets are depicted as lyers : "Seest thou not how the poets wander distracted in every valley and say that which they do not". Surely enough, this aya denounces only the pagan poets, a point which was emphasized by Ibn Rashiq in his defense of poetry in the introductory chapters of his 'Umda. On the other hand, this author adduces hadith material in order to show that lying in poetry is permissible, the Prophet himself approved of it silently in more than one case.

The meanings of khayru sh-shi'ri akdhaluhu were largely discussed by 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gurgani in his Asrar al-balaga, According to this brilliant author, the intention of the slogan is not a simple flat lie or a panegyric exaggeration such as attributing to a sentry the qualities of a caliph or saying to a poor wretch "you are the emir of the two Iraks !". Instead, he refers the slogan to the art of takhyil or evocation of phantasmagorias by poetic means. He highly esteems the art of transmuting things, or creating things that do not exist in reality or explaining natural phenomena by phantastic causes. This is the alchemy of poetry, its magic power, wherefore it would be called "permissible magic".

Arabic Aristotelianism reached its peak in the West, in Ibn Rushd, whose whole philosophic activity was directed towards establishing a true understanding of the stagirite. He was also the last to write a direct commentary on Aristotle's Poetics.

Though not particularly interested in contemporary poetry

— most of his examples are from early Arabic poetry — he makes the statement that al-ghuluw al-kadhib untruthful exaggeration was very far-spread among the poets of his time, and concedes that some of them such as al-Mutanabbi had written poems which inspite of their mendacious character were marvellous specimens of art.

A century later, another scholar of Andalusian offspring, al-Qartaganni in his Minhag al-bulaga' gave a list of the possible occurrences of truth and lie in poetry. Of the ten categories he mentions, only two which do not contain lies, only one consists of a mixture of both lie and truth, the rest, seven categories, contain only lies or untruth. He also gives marks and is explicit about where lies are permissible and where not. He admits that a lie may be useful for political reasons, such as overrating the danger of an enemy. And even the absurd has its place where irony and sarcasm are intended.

This is where Aristotelianism in Arabic poetics reached its final elaboration.

Only very rarely do we meet a Platonising poet in the Arabic Middle-Ages. A famous example is again an Andalusian, Ibn Surayj, who in his Risalat az-sawabi' wat-tawabi' talks about the necessity of the poet's being inspired by the divine beauty.

At this juncture it is easy to throw a bridge to Persian poetics. However, since the Persian hand-books on poetics are very much in the Arabic strand we rather have to look what Persian poets themselves have said about their view of the poetic art.

In what follows I am mainly drawing on three great Persian poets : Nizami, Rumi, Hafiz.

Nizami is the one who has the most detailed remarks on poetry in the introduction to his first epic poem Makhzan al-asrar or Treasury of Secrets.

Rumi and Hafiz have only dispersed lines on poetry in their ghazals.

The ideological fundament common to all three of them in their speculations on poetry is the doctrine of the Perfect Man, which had been elaborated by Ibn 'Arabi and already before him by al-Farabi in his writings on the Prophetic Statesmen. These poets regard themselves as Perfect Men. They believe themselves to be inspired by the Holy Spirit like the prophets, or in terms of Ibn Sina's and Farabi's prophetology, they are in contact with the Active Reason (al-'aql al-fa''al) though they do not, usually, give their inspirer that name; instead, they call it Holy Spirit, or Gabriel, meaning the Angel who inspired the Prophet. However, we know from Ibn Sina, that the Active Reason is called Holy Spirit or Angel Gabriel by the religious people. Being inspired by the Holy Spirit makes these poets Lords of the Universe as is the Perfect Man. In his philosophic interpretation of prayer Ibn Sina says that it is by the power of his imagination that a praying man is getting control over the ideas (muthul) of things, which are located in the Celestial Spheres. This is why, having the same might over the cosmic ideas, or pretending to have it, the poets compare their poetry with a prayer or more often with magic. It has to be stressed that this comparison is no mere metaphor, since magic ranked as a real science, and a philosophical one, in those times. In fact, magic and alchemy were often labelled the two great conclusions, natija, which means arts built on certain premises leading to certain results.

In the great medieval handbook of Magic, the Ghayat al-hakim by Pseudo-Majriti, magic is divided into theoretical and practical magic and it is stated here, that the most beautiful kind of theoretical magic is poetry.

What can the poet do with his magic power, or to use one of Nizami's expressions, with his pneumatic speech ?

He can change one thing into another, transmute dust into gold and create new worlds.

> I erected a new shadow-play,
> I moulded a theater of a new shape.
> I educated a number of morning-faced figures,
> and sewed a curtain from the magic of the dawn.
> (play with sihr and sahar)
> The substance of derwishes and of kings is in it,
> The Treasury of Divine Secrets is in it.

His poetry makes him the Lord of the universe. By putting his head on his knee — the attitude of mediation — he forms the magic ring by which he subdues the spheres.

The poets are nightingales at the heavenly throne, says Nizami. And Hafis boasts that the Active Reason wonders at hearing the qudsiyan, the Holy Spirits, around the heavenly throne, memorize his poems.

In another verse he emphasizes the faculty of poetry to surpass time and traverse space.

Rumi as mystic poet is mainly concerned with the dilemma posed by the ineffability of the divine and the urgent wish to speak about it.

> It is because of God's incomparability,
> that there are so many comparisons.

Language veils the divine and, at the same time, reveals it.

> The word that ascends from the souls, veils the soul;
> Language veils the pearl and the shore of the sea.

But on the other hand :

> The word (language, poetry) emerges from the veil,
> and you perceive it, since words are God's qualities.

But he, too, emphasizes the cosmic, time-surpassing and space-piercing character of poetry.

> In every moment I throw a din into the spheres !

And in a self-address he says :

> Make ghazals which will still be sung by the people after a hundred generations !
> A tissue that has been woven by God does not perish.

Both Rumi and Nizami emphasize the divine origin of language and of poetry in particular. The word was created by God, the soul could not have descended into the clay of the body without being endowed with speech to voice the heart's yearning. And though the spoken and written language does never fully render the silent language of the heart, yet.

> Language (meaning here mainly poetical language)
> is life (or soul) and souls are the remedy of souls,
> it is probably therefore, that language is as dear to us as life.

To close, let me point to a most revealing story told by Nizami in his last epic poem, dealing with Alexander the Great, who here exemplifies the development of the Perfect Man through the three stages of statesman, sage and Prophet.

The contents of the tale is as follows :

In an assembly of Greek philosophers Aristotle is being revered as the chief master. All present agree, except one : Plato leaves the assembly to Aristotle. He then invents the musical modes with their strange psychosomatic effects such as relaxing, exciting etc. On hearing the news of Plato's invention Aristotle makes up his mind to imitate him and show himself to be a match or more than match for him. Consequently, he invents a mode that paralyses the members and tries it with a person in the middle of a desert. Aristotle succeeds in paralysing the man with his melody, but only now does he realize not having cared for a melody that would restitute motion to his victim. He therefore has to appeal to Plato to play the requested melody which means he has to acknowledge the latter's superiority.

The tale symbolizes Plato's victory over Aristotle at the very moment it took shape in the history of Islamic philosophy and, showing Plato as an artist more than a philosopher, it also symbolizes the victory of the heart over the reason, one of the very crucial issues in the spiritual evolution of Islam.

MAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVILISATION

G. Verbeke (Belgium)

According to Friedrich Nietzsche a philosopher is a physician of civilisation : as a matter of fact civilisation may be ill, it may gradually decline and even die. Many civilisations in the course of history went through that process : as Oswald Spengler **Der Untergang des Abendlandes**) puts it, the evolution of a civilisation is comparable to that of an individual : there is a period of growth, followed by a stage of full maturity, then comes a gradual decline and finally a complete decay. Dealing with the future of Western culture the author is very pessimistic and believes that it will more and more decline within the next three centuries. In antiquity the Stoic philosophers firmly believed that each civilisation inevitably declines : in their view the development of time is cyclical and every cycle comes to an end as a result of moral depravation; hence new starts are indispensable, although the evolution will be the same : it will again lead to a progressive decline.

Man is the creator of his civilisation : the illnesses which occur in the evolution of a culture are comparable to those which may be present in the development of an individual. Each human existence is largely the result of personal initiative, creative activity, clear insight and perseverance in pursuing a particular goal. Man is at the very centre of the development of civilisation: personal consciousness and free creative initiatives are the stimulating forces in the life of individuals as well as in the development of human society. The notion of man is not the same in each civilisation : apparently there is a difference in this respect between Western and Arabian civilisation. Let us look for a while at the time when that bifurcation took place, when two divergent

anthropologies were born, two philosophies of man originating two different developments of civilisation.



It is a widespread and still predominant opinion that in the West individual consciousness started from the Renaissance and became one of the most characteristic features of modern culture. In the second half of the 14th and particularly in the 15th century people showed a keen interest in some important anthropological topics as v.g. the place of man in the universe, the immortality of the soul, the question of free will and fatalism. One of the most favoured subjects treated by the authors of that period, as it has been convincingly shown by P.O. Kristeller and E. Garin, was the dignity of man. According to Kristeller : "In many ways a pessimistic view of man and his state is typical of medieval thought" (**Renaissance Concepts of Man**, p. 5). With respect to this medieval pessimism the author refers to the work of Cardinal Lotharius, entitled **On the misery of human condition (De miseria humane conditionis)** and to the general movement preaching contempt for the world (contemptus mundi). In contrast with this, outstanding authors of the Renaissance, like Petrarch, Marsilio Ficino, G. Pico della Mirandola and Pietro Pomponazzi, forcefully emphasized the dignity of man. In 1486 Pico della Mirandola dedicated a special writing to that topic, **Discourse on the Dignity of Man (Oratio de dignitate hominis)**, whereas Ficino in his **Platonic Theology** and Pomponazzi in his **On the Immortality of the Soul (De immortalitate animae)** extensively deal with the same subject.

At least two questions may be asked concerning this general trend : how did Renaissance authors substantiate the prominent dignity of man among other beings ? Which were the arguments they put forward in order to advocate that man has a privileged

position within the universe ? As far as the authors I already mentioned are concerned, the arguments they expound are far from being new; they are in no way an original intuition or discovery of the Renaissance writers. On the contrary, they may be traced back to very ancient times and had repeatedly been developed by Christian and non-Christian writers. The most favoured argument used by the Renaissance authors points to the intermediary position of the human soul between the corporeal and the incorporeal world : man's soul is not quite incorporeal, because it is naturally linked to the body; and yet it is not corporeal either because the highest activities of man transcend the capacities of a merely material principle. Being at the frontier of two different worlds, man is not only a borderline, but also a link : because he incorporates into the unity of his being the two areas of the created world, he is at the origin of the coherence of the universe. Instead of being inevitably separated from each other, the two areas of being are bridged in the mysterious unity of human nature. According to Pico man has no determined nature, he has no fixed place in the hierarchy of being : he is the author of his own destiny, able to shape his being according to the pattern he wants to implement; so he becomes what he wants to be and gives himself the position in the universe he endeavours to attain. All these arguments may be found in the writings of Plotinus; the last topic I mentioned is demonstrably connected with the Plotinian doctrine of the "travelling soul", able to move from one level to another according to its moral behaviour. As to the intermediary position of man it was stressed by other Neoplatonists (v.g. Proclus) and was repeatedly emphasized by Christian writers : the same doctrine occurs in the works of Gregory of Nyssa and is extensively developed by Nemesius of Emesa : the first chapter of his treatise **On human nature** is almost entirely devoted to that theme, and at the end of the text we find one of the most impressive praises of man's dignity.

Why did authors of the 15th - 16th century lay so much em-

phasis on the dignity of human nature ? Had the dignity of man become controversial, or was it being disclosed for the first time in history ? Presumably the emphasis laid on this topic was not a reaction against medieval thought for having disregarded the exceptional value of human existence, but rather a vindication of some doctrines which had become questionable at the end of the Middle Ages. As long as the capacity of human reason, the freedom of the will and the immortality of the soul had not been put into question, the dignity of man and his privileged position in the universe could hardly be denied. At the beginning of the 16th century a heavy discussion broke out, in which many theologians and philosophers took part. Relying on Aristotelian arguments, Pomponazzi stated that it was impossible to prove the immortality of the soul on the basis of philosophical evidence. A similar controversy arose about the freedom of will, raising the problem of man's responsibility for his moral behaviour. The question of fatalism was put forward again, and perhaps more forcefully than it had been before : whereas the compatibility of human freedom with the divine Almightiness had been considered a mystery by Lorenzo Valla, the Christian doctrine about human freedom and responsibility was regarded as contradictory by the Stoics; according to him the Stoic theory represented the only consistent view on the matter. The actual freedom of the will was also put into question by Luther and Calvin, who strongly insisted on the depravity of human nature after the fall. Whereas Luther mainly stressed the weakness of man and the necessity of the divine help, Erasmus strongly supported the freedom of the will in spite of the fall : through sin man's freedom had been wounded, but not suppressed.

Already at the end of the Middle Ages William of Ockham denied the possibility of proving philosophically the freedom of the will. Under the growing influence of nominalism, confidence in metaphysical thinking gradually decreased, whereas sensible experience, observation of facts, immediate contact with reality

became more and more appreciated. For all these reasons I could hardly accept that Renaissance thinkers disclosed for the first time in history the eminent dignity of human nature : they rather had to face a cultural context in which the value of life was jeopardized. According to Prof. Garin the Renaissance was not a happy age : the image of man slowly elaborated during the Middle Ages with the help of Christian theology and the most valuable ideas of Greek thought was put into question. The Scholastic method and speculative arguing were no longer considered adequate tools leading to the discovery of truth, and so the Christian anthropology laboriously built up during centuries, was in danger of collapsing. Renaissance authors were compelled to reexamine the image of man in a new context and on the basis of a new approach. The Renaissance period was an important step in the historical growth of individual consciousness, not because people became aware for the first time of the dignity of man, but because some important features of human nature were largely questioned.

Within this context it may be worthwhile to look further at the legacy of an earlier period, the Middle Ages, and to investigate how the image of man has been gradually shaped, especially with respect to our topic, the development of civilisation. Of course, I could only point to some decisive steps of an evolution that still goes on and apparently leads to a growing consciousness of personal value and responsibility.



One of the most decisive stages in the development of civilisation was achieved before the Renaissance period, mainly during the 12th and 13th centuries. At that time there happened to be a unique historical meeting between East and West, a dialogue between Arabian philosophy and Western thought. When in the 12th century the great translation movement started in

the West, Arabian philosophers were already familiarized with Greek science and Aristotelian thought : they had assimilated the legacy of antiquity, particularly the system of Aristotle three centuries earlier. In this respect there was quite a difference between the Western world and Arabian civilisation : scholars in the West were eager to get acquainted with Arabian science and philosophy, as they wanted to get more information about the whole of Aristotle's philosophy : up to that time they were only acquainted with Aristotelian logic. Almost simultaneously some important Arabic treatises and some basic writings of the Stagirite were turned into latin. Within a relatively short period a great amount of Arabic and Greek philosophical works were conveyed to West. These writings were carefully studied, especially at the newly founded universities : they were examined critically and as it was to be expected, the whole renewal resulted into a large philosophical discussion. The question was whether some important doctrines of Arabian philosophy could be accepted and harmoniously integrated into Western thought. The topic most heavily discussed, was the very notion of man, the consistency or density of individual existence: what was at stake was essentially the activity of the mind, the freedom of the will and the relationship between man and the divine Creator. On these issues some basic disagreement developed between East and West, between Arabian and Western civilisation : either consciously or unconsciously the notion of individual man was constantly at the heart of the discussion. The further evolution of civilisation has been largely dependent upon the options made at that time and further developed during the Renaissance period and the modern era. If this interpretation is correct, then the future of a civilisation basically depends on the notion of man involved and concretized in it. Aristotle firmly believed that some human beings are slaves by nature, that they are not able to be their own master, they have to be guided and directed by other people; he also maintains women to be inferior to men, not ac-

dentally, but according to their natural constitution : in his view, reason is more powerful in men than it is in women; besides the Stagirite declares Greeks to be superior to other peoples : Greeks and barbarians could not be put on the same level. In Stoic philosophy a quite different notion of man is put forward : all human beings are considered to be equal, men and women, citizens and slaves, Greeks and barbarians. It could hardly be denied that such different notions of man must deeply influence the development of a civilisation where they are adopted and embodied.

But let us look more closely at the topics discussed between Arabian and Western philosophers. Among the Arabian thinkers of that period Ibn Sina and Ibn Rochd are those whose works in their latin version were widely diffused and frequently studied. The **De Anima** of Ibn Sina, a treatise in which the author like al-Kindi and al-Farabi maintains the unicity of the active intellect for all men, was translated into latin at the request of the archbishop of Toledo : the version was made about 1260 at Toledo by a jewish philosopher, Ibn Daoud, in collaboration with Gundisalvi, the archdeacon of the Segovia cathedral. Several other works of the same author, among which the **Metaphysics**, were probably translated at the same period and at the same place. The latin West was also acquainted with the **De intellectu** of al-Kindi and the **De intellectu et intelligibili** of al-Farabi. In the world-view of Ibn Sina as well as in his theory of knowledge the active intellect plays an important part : it represents the lowest level of the higher intellects, proceeding gradually from the divine Principle. Only the first intellect flows directly from God, whereas the lower stem directly from the intellect that immediately precedes them in the hierarchy of perfection. The active intellect constitutes the tenth level in that series : from this source spring the substantial forms of all sublunary beings as well as the intelligible objects of thought. These objects are not elaborated by each individual on the basis of sense data; sensible experience is only a preliminary step that prepares the subject to receive in-

telligible forms from the active intellect. In this respect the role of the individual in the act of thinking is rather reduced : not being endowed with an active intellect of his own, man is constantly dependent on a higher principle, the same for all individuals. So the act of thinking does not fully belong to the individual : each subject receives intelligible objects according to his sensible experience and in agreement with it.

The teaching of Ibn Rochd is much more radical : in his view not only the active principle of thinking is the same for all men, but also the receptive intellect. That is the way in which Ibn Rochd was understood and interpreted by latin authors : there would be only one thinking mind for all humans, this single intellect however is linked to each of them in the act of thinking. In this view thinking could hardly be attributed to an individual subject : quite understandably this issue became a source of conflict between East and West. Many Western philosophers and theologians were convinced this teaching to entail a dangerous mutilation of the individual; it was in their view a negation of the most characteristic feature of a human person, individual consciousness and free initiative. During several centuries this topic was the object of a historical debate.

The entry of Ibn Rochd into the Western world occurred about half a century later than the first translation of Ibn Sina into latin : a manuscript of the National Library in Paris (lat. 15.453), written in 1243, contains the most important works of Ibn Rochd known in the 13th century. Michael Scot was the main translator of this Arabian philosopher : he stayed at the court of Frederick II between 1228 and 1235 : several works of Ibn Rochd were translated during that time. William of Auvergne and Philip the Chancelor were the first Western authors quoting the famous Arabian philosopher. William

uses the writings of Ibn Rochd in a cautious way : this is rather puzzling because the Bishop of Paris is deeply concerned with the problem of the intellect in his treatise **On the Soul** (De anima), that was composed between 1231 and 1236. In this writing he strongly opposes the teaching of Ibn Sina regarding the separate active intellect ; he even goes further and formulates a series of objections against accepting an active intellect within the soul : since the soul is totally uncompounded and indivisible, one could not distinguish in it several faculties without destroying its basic unity. From this viewpoint the explanation of the cognitive act becomes rather difficult : having suppressed the active intellect, William is constrained to asribe to God the role that had been imparted to this active principle; consequently God is considered to be the illuminator of human soul ; being deprived of the active principle of knowing, the soul will only be able to produce ideas thanks to a divine intervention. In this context the name of Ibn Rochd is not mentioned and the doctrine of the Arabian philosopher is not examined.

The references to Ibn Rochd are much more frequent in the works of Albert the Great, who shows quite a lot of sympathy towards the Arabian philosopher. Seemingly the author does not suspect that Ibn Rochd jeopardizes the integrity of man with all the consequences resulting from it as to the individual's responbility and destiny. Even in his commentary on the **De Anima** of Aristotle, Albert does not emphasize the difference between his theory of knowledge and that of Ibn Rochd. When he has to describe the way in which the active intellect is linked to an individual subject, he writes without hesitating that only on a small number of items his teaching differs from that of Ibn Rochd. As a matter of fact, the Arabian philosopher maintains the active intellect to be separate, but on this issue he agrees with nearly all philosophers. Moreover he is coherent with himself when he states that the union of the active intellect with the

soul must have a cause. Albert declares again that he does not introduce any change into this doctrine, except insofar it is foreign to Aristotle's teaching; according to the Stagirite every being including a passive principle, must also possess the corresponding active constituent. As a result human soul could not be deprived of an active principle of thinking; the active intellect must be a part and a faculty of the soul. The commentary on the **De Anima** has probably been composed after 1256 : Albert shows to be conscious of an undeniable difference between his theory of knowledge and that of Ibn Rochd, and yet he does not stress it that much nor does he consider it to be really important.

As a whole the thought of Ibn Rochd may be characterized as a sharply drawn dualism between matter and mind, between material things and spiritual reality. By dualism I mean a keen separation, so emphasized that the two categories of reality, matter and mind, could hardly meet or be united. In Ibn Rochd's view the intellect being spiritual could not enter into the composition of a human individual and constitute with the material component one single substance : the intellect must be separate and unique for all men. But let us look more closely at the arguments developed by Ibn Rochd, as they were interpreted by Western authors.

The first arguing runs as follows : when several individuals participate in the same specific perfection, the distinction between them stems from matter; in this sense, matter may be called the individuation principle, not because it solves the whole problem of individual existence, but it explains how several individuals possess the same specific perfection. When there are several intellects, we have to apply to them the same rule : individuation must proceed from matter, and consequently these intellects could not avoid being material. In other words, Ibn Rochd believes that the intellect could not be immaterial if it is

the substantial form of matter. Instead of a substantial union, Ibn Rochd speaks of a "continuation" (continuatio) : which is a transitory link, effected between the unique intellect and the multiplicity of individual subjects. This link is established by means of the intelligible form, which is basically ambiguous : it resides in the receptive intellect and presents the same character of eternity like it, but on the other hand it is connected with the sensible image as its subject and in this respect it is perishable. Each individual thinks, not by an intellect proper to him, but by the unique intellect that transcends all individual distinctions; hence the receptive intellect although it is substantially one, is also multiple through the succeeding intelligible forms which receive their content from sensible images. So there is a tie between the material and the spiritual, but this transitory union does not result into the constitution of a single substance.

A second argument of Ibn Rochd (basically the same as the first) is related to the intelligible forms : if each man is endowed with an individual intellect, the forms by which the intellects pass from potency to act, will also be multiple : each individual will only be able to think forms which are proper to him. Accordingly the intelligible forms in their turn will be individual as the intellects are : they will correspond to the multiple thinking principles which they have to actualize. Ibn Rochd declares this viewpoint to be incompatible with the universal character of our intellectual knowledge. If the intelligible forms by which we think, are proper to each subject, they will not extend beyond the frontiers of an individual existence; in other words, each individual knowing will be reduced to the level of sensible experience; intellectual knowledge will not possess any dimension of transcendence, it will be unable to go beyond individual reality.

A third argument expounded by Ibn Rochd is concerned with the phenomenon of teaching; how could a master transmit any

knowledge to his pupils ? According to Ibn Rochd transmission of knowledge could not proceed in the same way as the procreation of an individual : in this case the being that comes to be is not identical with his parents, but it participates with them in the same specific perfection. In the case of teaching, the master communicates a knowledge which is not only specifically the same as his own, although being individually distinct; what is transmitted is a knowledge not only of the same kind, but a knowledge that is really the same. Ibn Rochd believes this phenomenon of transmission to be possible only if master and pupil have the same intellect : teaching means to make the pupil thinking what the master thinks, by the intermediary of the same intellect; participation in the same intellect makes communication and dialogue between master and pupil possible. If on the contrary there are many intellects, each of them will have its own knowledge proper to him, to the extent that it will be impossible to communicate it to others : everybody will be shut up within his own consciousness and will not be able to meet others.

Averroist monopsychism had some followers in the West from the second half of the 13th century. Several masters of the Parisian Faculty ofArts professed this doctrine : among the most commonly known I could mention Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, Bernier of Nivelles and some commentators of Aristotle's Ethics. At the beginning of the 14th century the same trend was represented by John of Jandun and John of Goettingen. Later on this theory has been taught for centuries at the Universities of Bologna and Padua.

In his reaction against Averroism Aquinas clearly shows what is at issue in the debate : it not only concerns intellective knowledge but volitive life as well. The real question is whether there is only one single intellect and one single will for all men. Does the principle of volitive life belong to one single substance outside

man or does it belong as a constitutive part to each human person ? According to Aquinas to ask the question is to answer it : accepting one single will for all men, one could not find a basis anymore on which various human beings may be distinguished; if what is properly human, mind and will, is taken away from the individual and is put in a separate and unique substance, it will be impossible to distinguish many individuals, because what is properly human has been eliminated; these beings become infrahuman and there will be only one single man, since there will be only one single thinking and one single willing subject.

In this context Aquinas speaks of human responsibility : how could man be the master of his acts, if there is only one will that resides in a separate substance ? In the doctrine of Ibn Rochd willing acquires a merely transcendent dimension: it is detached from the individual, set aside from the intimacy of a human person to be located in a transcendent world, which is not without contact with human actions in their contingent process, but which takes them away from the density of a concrete person. How could an individual be responsible of actions of which he is not really the principle, of which he may be the accidental and contingent occasion, but of which the true principle is beyond his existence ? To accept one single will for all men means to ruin all human responsibility, and consequently to destroy moral duty as well as the laws of human society; it will not make sense anymore to chastise or to reward someone, life in society will become impossible. Aquinas believes that to show the consequences of this doctrine means to rule it out definitively.

On the basis of the experience of thinking and willing, Aquinas decidedly maintains the integrity of each individual. The spiritual is characterized as being "subsistent", a principle of autonomy and reflection ; if man is spiritual, then he is not totally inserted into cosmic evolution : he is to some extent able to

choose his own destiny, he is also able to promote science through original discoveries. So man is not a sheer result of previous generations, his existence could not be fully explained on the ground of antecedent factors : he bears within himself something "subsistent", a moment of originality and transcendence with respect to the development of the material world. Intellectual soul is at the borderline of the material and the spiritual reality, insofar as it is an immaterial substance, being at once the form of a body; man is composed of both a material and a spiritual constituent : he is at the frontier of two worlds and is apparently related to the entire creation. Thus man realizes within himself a mysteriously substantial synthesis of the great categories of being.

* * *

Another confrontation that stimulated the development towards individual consciousness and freedom is related to the doctrine of emanation. The heart of the matter is to uncover how the created world is dependent upon the Creator, how finite beings proceed from the infinite, how changing reality springs from its source. If one declares that the world necessarily and eternally flows from the highest principle, he will be unable to warrant the freedom of human conduct : in this case, each individual, including whatever he is and does, is inserted into this necessary process. Adapting the famous formulation of Spinoza according to which the world flows from God like the properties of a triangle from its definition, it becomes impossible to reserve a place for the free choices of a human individual. The creative act comprises whatever exists or is done; nothing occurs outside creative causality. If this activity is a necessary process, we have to conclude that everything is determined. This issue also has been the object of a debate between Arabian and Western philosophy : it was in

its turn a very important topic with respect to the concept of man and the development of civilisation.

Needless to recall that Neoplatonism exercised a profound and lasting influence on medieval thought : the idea of a necessary emanation from the first principle, including whatever exists, is at the very centre of this philosophy. Plotinus already had strongly vindicated the eternity of creation in his controversy with the Gnostics : these latter claimed the Creator of the world to be evil and the universe itself to be basically evil; in their view the world had come to be and will pass away at the same time in the future. In his treatise **Against the Gnostics,** dating back to 263, Plotinus tries to demonstrate that the Gnostic theory is unacceptable and that creation is not a contingent event, the result of a deliberation, something that could have not occurred. According to him the emanation of the created beings is not the outcome of a contingent decision, it belongs to the very nature of the first principle. Origen, the famous christian writer, adopted the same viewpoint : God is always creator and providence, he could not become creator at a particular time, without having been it before. Synesias, bishop of Ptolemaís (Libya), after being converted to christianity, did not give up his teaching on the eternity of the world. In the circles of Alexandria and the school of Athens, the eternity of creation was originally accepted, not only by non christian philosophers, but also by christian thinkers who maintained the eternity of creation. I could quote scholars like Ammonius, one of the most remarkable commentators of Aristotle in Alexandria, and Olympiodorus; in the School of Athens there was Proclus, probably Isidorus and Damascius, and certainly Simplicius. Among the christians, I could cite Elias, Davis and Stephen of Alexandria. In this context John Philoponus appears to be an exception : in his view the universe could not exist from eternity, it started existing by a free decision of the Creator.

Which are the arguments developed by the main representative of the emanation theory in the 5th century, Proclus, head on the School of Athens ? In one of his works *Elementatio theologica* (1268) the author points to the fact that the world was made in the image of an eternal pattern ; the Ideas, of which sensible reality is a reflection, exist from always and are immutable. Hence the master concludes that the world would not be a copy of its pattern, if it had a beginning. Moreover, God must always exert his creative activity: if he existed first without effectively creating, then he inevitably had to pass from potency to act, and this is impossible, since the nature of God excludes any kind of potentiality : God being eternally and immutably what he is, could never have passed through such a radical change, namely from inactivity to the creation of the universe. The same conclusion may be drawn by considering the becoming that occurs in the world : the cosmos should be regarded as a living organism, penetrated by the world soul. This soul is essentially a principle of movement : it could not have started exercising its activity at a particular time, without displaying it earlier; that would be contrary to its nature. Besides, Plato teaches that the world will never pass away : there is a correlation between coming to be and passing away, as there is one between existing without beginning and never cease to exist. Whatever begins to exist, did not always exist and bears within itself the possibility of not existing. Therefore, it will come to an end at some time in the future. If the world will always exist in the future, that means that it never began to exist. Proclus also refers to the axiom "ex nihilo nihil" : nothing could ever be produced from nothing. If the world started existing, it must have been drawn from absolute non being, which is impossible. The author finally stresses the sacred character of the cosmos : it is a blessed divinity and could not be put on the level of mortal and transitory beings. To consider the world as a reality that comes to be and passes away, would mean, in Proclus' view, to

lower it to the level of corruptible beings, which is quite contrary to its divine nature.

The position of Ibn Sina in its turn corresponds to that of Neoplatonism: in his view also creation never started, the universe exists from eternity; the necessary Existent necessarily produces what he causes and this in virtue of his own being ; it is not by chance nor in a contingent way that he displays his creative activity, he would not be what he is, if he refrained from producing the universe. The proper characteristic of the Necessary Existent is to be perfect and even more than perfect : he is mere Goodness and totally unselfish Generosity; creating the universe, he is not in quest of any advantage; what he produces he makes existent as an effulgence of his goodness and love. How could God ever become creator without having been it from always ? According to Ibn Sina God being the supreme Goodness could not shut up himself in an egostic isolation, he could not retire within himself and enjoy his perfection without communicating it; he must have manifested himself from always in the variety of created beings. One of the most important arguments put forward by our author in order to support his viewpoint, is the immutability of the highest Existent, free from any kind of potency : if he had become creator at a particular time without being it before, a change would have occurred in him, for it is not the same to create or not to create. Could the highest Existent have started creating as a result of a free decision on his behalf ? Ibn Sina declines this possibility : such a decision would be uncomprehensible and arbitrary : if God was first inactive, why did he suddenly decide to start his creative work ? It will be impossible to find any ground for such a decision : if God is the only existent and if he is immutable, nothing could ever impel him to start his creative activity. It is equally excluded to claim that God existed before the created beings : this formulation is even contradictory, since it implies that God exists in time,

whereas he is intemporal : if God exists "before" something, that means he is inserted into temporal succession. Finally it has already been demonstrated by Aristotle that movement could not have begun in time : if everything is unmoved, no movement could not have begun in time : if everything is unmoved, no movement could ever start, for it always requires a previous movement in order to start and so ad infinitum. If one considers the question from the viewpoint of the second causes, he will be compelled to go back indefinitely in the series of antecedents in order to explain any movement that occurs now. If this becoming is always going on, the primary Cause must exercise his creative activity from always. Therefore, Ibn Sina is persuaded that the universe exists from eternity as a permanent disclosure of divine Goodness and Generosity : God is the one who gives always, he always did it in the past and will always do it in the future.

The same perspective may be found in the **De divisione naturae** of John Scot Eriugena. The author wonders whether God exists before the work he created : the reply is negative, for if the Creator existed before his work, this latter would be something accidental, an element added to his perfection. This viewpoint must be excluded, for God is but only insofar as he is cause. In the case of God to be cause is not something additional; God is always cause, he always was it in the past and will always remain it in the future. What has been caused by him always subsist in him, it subsisted there in the past and will subsist there in the future. The whole creation eternally exists in the divine Logos : this is the meaning attributed by John Scot to the beginning of the Bible (Book Genesis). Heaven and earth created in the principle are nothing else than the primordial causes of the intelligible and sensible reality existing in the divine Word. As a result (and Scot comes back to it several times) creation must be eternal, not only the primordial causes but also the effects. The author however specifies that the visible world being in space

and time, is eternal insofar as it exists in the Logos. All those beings which constantly come to be and pass away, were simultaneously created in the divine Word. In God there is no distinction between contemplating and making : contemplation does not precede implementation, the two coincide. Hence the entire creation is a permanent theophany : the creation exists in God and God exists in the creation ; Scot even states that God is in a marvellous and unexpressible way constantly created in his creation. In this neoplatonic perspective the density of human existence is seriously jeopardized, even if the authors in question recognize man's freedom and responsibility. Western scholars of the 12th and 13th centuries did not accept this theory of emanation. Aquinas constantly emphasizes that creation is not a necessary process, but a free and autonomous initiative of the Creator. God must be master of his acts : only a subject master of his acts, is also master of what he does ; this mastership could only be exercised through the will. Therefore creation must be a volitive act, fully free and autonomous.

The Neoplatonists teach that it belongs to the nature of the good to communicate itself; this idea is expressed in the well-known saying : "Bonum est diffusivum sui". If no other beings exist, it belongs to the nature of the good to constitute them : in this perspective the supreme Good must necessarily create other existents. Aquinas wonders whether this viewpoint may be accepted : couldn't God exist without producing other beings ? The author acknowledges that God necessarily wills his own perfection, but this willing does not involve other beings to be constituted. God is perfect without his perfection being communicated to created beings. Aquinas does not intend to say that the creation of other beings is not an act of goodness : but it would be contrary to the nature of God, who is a conscious and volitive Being, to interpret creation as a necessary process. The making of other beings is on behalf of the Supreme Goodness a conscious and free act.

Some authors (like Philoponus) claim that the world could not exist from eternity. Aquinas does not agree with them, although he recognizes that divine Goodness is better manifested if creation started: in this way it clearly appears that finite beings depend upon the first principle, that this latter does not act by necessity of nature and that his power is unlimited.

From the viewpoint of finite reality creation is explained as a total and constant dependence upon the First Being. Each individual, in whatever he does, is entirely dependent upon the source of his being. Does it follow from there that any autonomous activity of man becomes impossible ? Should we conclude that man is determined in his conduct ? In Aquinas' view the freedom of man is founded on the freedom of the creative act : God is beyond necessity and contingency, being the origin of what is necessary to be necessary and of what is contingent to be contingent. If man is free in his conduct, it is because the Creator freely wills man to be endowed with freedom. This could not be the case if the process of creation were necessary.

The representatives of nominalism (William of Occam, Peter d'Ailly and others) have carried to the extreme limit the freedom of the creative act and of the divine government : the distinction made between the absolute power of God and his ordained power is the unequivocal expression of this trend. God's will is totally autonomus and sovereign and is able to perform whatever is not contradictory. The world in which we live, the physical as well as the moral order, are considered to be the result of an entirely free choice on behalf of the Creator : this however does not involve that God does not respect the order he has established. This nominalist doctrine is the utmost opposite of any kind of determinism.

* * *

Dealing in this conference with the future of civilisation, I was paradoxically rather concerned with the past : to some degree however the future is present in the past and the only way to predict something about the future is to look at the past. Modern civilisation in the West did not mainly start from the Renaissance period as it has been commonly believed ; the decisive step in its development was two centuries earlier, at the time when both Arabian and Greek thought were assimilated in the latin world. At that time a controversy arose between Arabian and Western thought : its ultimate issue was the notion of man, especially the question of individual consciousness and personal responsibility. The further evolution of civilisation clearly shows that this topic is a capital one. As it was in the past likewise in the future the development of civilisation, its progress or decline, will largely depend upon the concept of man that is embodied and concretized in it. If a philosopher is a physician of civilisation, he has to disclose, to revise and to criticize the notion of man of his own time in order to make it more balanced, more comprehensive and more critically grounded, if necessary.

FUTURE OF MYSTICISM

André Mercier (Berne)

I.

To be frank, I must say that I am unhappy about the title of this paper. First of all, the word mysticism does not express exactly what I have in mind, second I would never claim to be a prophet and hence I cannot pretend to predict in any way the future of anything. A first correction luckily happened to an original title which had been suggested to me, saying **the** future of... By dropping the definite article, the obligation to speak or write about "**the** future..." has already been weakened so much, that I feel relieved of a burden. My task is, I believe, reduced to analyzing a situation, making conjectures from that analysis and arguing about them as well as possible.

As to the word mysticism, it has either received — as with French **mysticisme** and the equivalent in other Latin languages or in German in contradistinction to the word "**la mystique**", and especially in Anglo-Saxon philosophical and other circles, — an after-taste of vagueness and obscurity of either thinking or belief and even the meaning of ideological thought which unfortunately stand in radical opposition to what the actual mystical experience yields in the mind of true mystics. And when I look at what has happened in the last years in certain countries of Islam, I must state that a totally degenerate and even reprehensible way of life has developed in the name of a state of mind which — if authentically realized — would be completely opposed to that very way of life.

I must therefore explain clearly what I claim to be authentic mystical contemplation and what I do advocate and what I do not.

Indeed, just as the claim of a true scientist asserts the possibility of attaining knowledge through **judgment** by specifically assuming the attitude of objectivity resting on the subject's greatest possible independence of judgment with respect to its object, the doctrine of a true mystic asserts the possibility to reach knowledge through **contemplation** by radically renouncing the judicative attitude of the subject, replacing it precisely by the contemplative one.

If from the objective attitude of scientists there **results** a particular kind of intersubjectivity among experts of science who can compare their findings and find them indeed — as has always been the case among true experts — in common agreement, there **results** too another particular kind of intersubjectivity among mystics, viz. in the common agreement that their experiences yield the same common knowledge, however a knowledge totally different in nature from the objective knowledge of the science.

Scientific knowledge on the one hand is not only objective, — which is the character of the manner it is acquired, i.e. of the attitude or mode in the act of cognition, — it is also analytical, — which is however the character of its method, — and it is finally theoretical, — which is the nature of its results, for even though there is in every science an inseparable entanglement between the experimental and the theoretical approaches, at the end — i.e. when a piece of research is considered to be brought to a provisional full stop (even though it remains open for reconsideration and for further research in the light of either new experiments or new rational insights), — this piece of research stands in the form of a scientific theory which is written down, say in a paper or in a book.

Mystic knowledge on the other hand is contemplative, and is found to be such not only as far as the attitude or mode of

cognition is concerned. It is never analytical in its method and does not yield specific theories as its results, — although the very ancient Greek word in its original Pythagorean sense was meant to connect the mind with the mystical. What is notable about mystic knowledge is, that it is contemplative through and through, in a radical way, for it is contemplative in its attitude, in its method and in its results. The word contemplative must be very clearly understood as meaning that the subject of mystic knowledge is **'with-in the temple,'** where the word temple stands for 'the abode of the divine' (or the divinity), which is the supreme Being in its one-ness and its infinitude. The fact that a particular temple made of wood, stones or concrete — a temple for the ancient Greek or for the Hindu, a synagogue for the Jew, a church for the Christian, or a mosque for the Moslem — is of finite size and is placed in the middle of an environment itself made of a multiplicity of finite beings and things, does in no way prevent it from being the abode of a supreme Being endowed with infinitude and one-ness, for the latter is by virtue of its almightiness never submitted to either the limitations of worldly situations or the principles of logic like the principle of contradiction which are made only for discussions among men about the finite and multiple beings.

The 'experiential' aspect of mystic knowledge and its 'theoretical' aspect — if these two adjectives could meaningfully be applied to it though they are borrowed from a manner of speech adapted to judicative knowledge (i.e. knowledge through judgment) — these two aspects coincide. In other words, there is no difference between experience and theory in mystic knowledge, especially because that knowledge does not make use of any discursive language with the purpose to formulate, communicate and fix any limited, more or less achieved piece of cognition. In mystic knowledge, there is neither **a priori**, nor **a posteriori**, for that knowledge is a 'presence' in boundlessness and one-ness for which

before and after make sense neither logically nor temporally. And therefore mystic knowledge makes no use of logic and no use of experimentation. The 'language' (between inverted kommas) of both the 'experience' and the 'theory' is **silence;** it is also the attitude as such : This silent contemplation is participative and receptive at the same time, and as far as mystics can exchange their knowledge inspite of that silence, the contents of their respective experience is always found to be the same, so that actually there are no fields where the agreement between 'experts' is greater than in the field of mystic contemplation.

Yet, when looked at from the exterior, mystics as individual people look very different from one another. Most of the time, they — but not all — are attached to a specific religion, even to a particular, more or less organized, spiritual group within a religion; a mystic may be a Sufi within Islam, a Franciscan within Christianity, a worshipper of Shiva within Hinduism..., and the particulars originating from such a group are then put on him by those who observe him, like a label is being glued on a package of some ware, say tobacco. However, if this comparison may be followed further we must accept that tobacco will grow under various circumstances of latitude, of climate and so on and will taste differently to the smoker, yet it always is tobacco. Similarly, mystics are born in different places at different times and under various specific circumstances, and they — as human beings — have to cope with these circumstances, which explains the various labels. Especially, if they wish, or are requested, to exteriorize their interior experience, they have nothing but the means of either philosophy or religion to do it, and since philosophy builds schools and religion is at hand always as some specific religion with its particular dogmas, it becomes a quasi-impossibility to avoid the intermediary : the **targuman** or drogoman of either schools or religions. The question then arises : In case the specific religions disappear, will there still be mystics ? I shall not, at least not yet, give a final answer to that question.

But in any case, there have been mystics throughout the ages and among all peoples. There are still such. They have mostly been highly respected when there was some evidence that they were genuine mystics, and especially the great ones among them, although there are many more who were or are what might be called petty mystics, just as there are lots of petty scientists or of petty philosophers or what have you, since most philosophers, scientists and other men are petty in their trade.

Only at times and places and under the influence of groups who claimed to enlighten the masses, have the mystics — whether great or petty — come to be looked upon with contempt and the assumed authenticity of their cognitive achievements been doubted. The 17th century of Western civilization was such a period. It called itself the 'Enlightenment', though it put out several lights that were absolutely valid — and I am not to be considered a reactionary when I say that. But that denomination does not make much sense when we realize that mystic knowledge is as good an enlightenment as any other knowledge. The fundamental error of enemies of such mode of knowledge consists in believing that they are entitled to judge about the authenticity of another mode by the application of criteria that are only adequate to judgements passed within the limitations of their own chosen modes. Passing an objective judgment upon contemplative knowledge is not more permissible than considering objective knowledge as unfit and illusory from a contemplative point of view.

II.

There is no doubt that the acquirement of knowledge is apt to make happy. Perhaps even the criterion of 'more happiness' is precisely the increase in knowledge. But then it requires a sufficiently broad conception of knowledge. The broadest possible of such a conception connects knowledge with love, by saying "I

know what I love and I love what I know." I have dealt with that conception elsewhere at length and shall not dwell upon it here any longer.[1] Happiness is not a question of the body, but of the soul and mind. I recognize that the body and the mind cannot be rigorously separated though the mind cannot be reduced to the body (especially not by brain physiology),[2] and that a satisfaction of the body may be in many cases a pre-condition for the happiness of the mind, but conversely the happiness of the mind is often a condition for the satisfaction of the body, and I believe that it consists in knowing the **how** and the **why**, the **whence** and the **whither** and similar answers to fundamental questions of that sort.

Yet, one hears again and again say that to know more is not necessarily the way to more happiness and there was in that respect the story of the **Fall** and original sin; or because, it is said, there are other paths to happiness. The contradiction between the two opinions is however, I believe, only apparent, because the latter opinion is uttered by those who have a restricted conception of knowledge, especially when they believe that there is only objective knowledge, all other alledged knowledge held illusory, whereas the former opinion is meant to really encompass all forms of knowledge : scientific, moral, and mystic knowledge and even that which is transmitted by religion, hence knowledge as disclosing not only truth, but also beauty, the good, and the divine.

In many cases, it will be the mystic kind of knowledge rather than e.g. the scientific one which will be found apt to procure happiness. But then the question arises : can anybody partake of mystic knowledge ?

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1. See A. MERCIER, **De l'amour et de l'être** (Louvain et Paris 1960, pp. 1-193).
2. As has been explained by JOHN ECCLES, e.g. at the **Entretiens** of the Institut International de Philosophie in Alicante.

The answer to this last question is, against a common belief of the followers of the 18th century Enlightenment : no, or at least not quite. For, men are born with various degrees in capacities along the various directions of possible mental activities, sometimes practically nought degree. Thus, some become scientists, some artists, some other men of all thinkable trades ; but the non-scientific ones are unable to partake in the scientific knowledge, they can at most profit from its discoveries, which does not procure them happiness, but merely perhaps some kind of welfare. Of course, children can be — and are — trained and achieve some progress towards the acquirement of knowledge of various kinds (mostly scientific knowledge in our modern world). But that happens in the shadow of the already mentioned, 18th century Enlightenment ideology, which is still with us in the West and is spreading throught the world — though there is resistance to it in many places. It has contributed to make Western peoples what they are today.

Ten or more years ago, when I was the Rector of my university, a proposal was made to me that the University should accept as entrance examinations such as were offered by colleges where not the scientific but the artistic training would build the main basis of teaching. I was in favour of that proposal; it is well known that there exist such very good colleges — in Germany, and the U.S.... and I am thinking in that respect especially of the one established years ago by the famous Indian poet and prince RABINDRANATH TAGORE in Shantiniketan (West Bengal). However, the Teachers' Association and the Deans of the various colleges established in the geographical area around my university opposed the idea and kept to the claim that training of young boys and girls has to stretch between the scientific and so-called humanistic disciplines. But what does humanistic mean? According to tradition, it practically amounts to the acquaintance with classical languages and literature, the mother tongue, his-

tory, a sufficient amount of mathematics (after all, PLATO postulated the knowledge of mathematics !), and a little bit of science like physics, chemistry, biology, geography. Such humanistic training is by the way more and more forsaken, because it works obsolete, and the scientific one is preferred, or also the more commercial and technical ones. These kinds of teaching, which have become 'officially' recognized by governments, show great lacunes : the students, when they come out of College, know practically nothing of the aesthetical, ethical, social and juridical aspects of life and just **nothing** of the yearning of the human soul toward the contemplation of the divine. There are, it is true, some religiously conducted, private colleges, but the pupils there are trained at most in the recitation of a few prayers and the stories told in the scripture.

In the countries of Islam, it may be completely different. Especially, Holy scripture, i.e. the Quran will in some cases constitute the main part of the teaching. But even then, we may question whether this corresponds to the **mystic** aspiration of the soul. For, reading and learning the Scripture is quite different from exercising one's spirit **at contemplating**. It brings **religious insight**, but not the silent attention which mystic requires. That attention is not religion, it is not either a liberation of infraconscious as is the artificially produced 'voyage' by drugs like hash or mascalin or L.S.D.

For the latter do not make free, and the former do not initiate to the mystery of Being.

The only well organized traditions of teaching mystic contemplation are probably to be found in India as far as they are not — as many of them have been found — mere fakes, but follow the long and difficult phases which lead to **samadhi** and finally allow the subject to assert that 'he is' Brahman, when all judica-

tive existence has been drastically ignored through a long and hard technique of immortality. Meanwhile, by following such steps up to royal yoga as recommended in the **sutras** of e.g. PATANJALI, one is indeed lead into a state of integration into Being, whereby however the later is experienced as the undifferentiated Absolute, whereas its experience can also be of a nature which corresponds to the person-to-person relationship which is more emphasized within the groups which circle around the monotheistic religions in which the Absolute so to speak 'possesses a Name.' So, even though mystics will in the last instance agree, this does not mean that the contemplation is unique in its actualization, for it knows many steps and reveals the oneness and infinitude at variance, for instance along buddhism which does not refer to Brahman, but to nirvana, even though there are buddhistic practices analogous to yoga.

For him who has not only seen these various ways pretty near but has had the experiences, it appears that one must distinguish between mystic contemplation as such and the religious experience of the revelation of the 'Name of God' — as the phrase goes in the **Cabbala.**

In this paper, I am concerned with mystic contemplation and not with religious revelation.

III.

In old days, say a century ago, when every day life was not as hectic as it is now — at least in the West — and when it was not (yet) necessary to be highly specialized and long trained in some specific field if one were to get a decent job to make a living, people, especially young people had still time 'to be idle,' meaning to let their mind so to speak wander in the atmosphere of contemplation, in short to **contemplate**, even though not every-

one, especially not every youngster was (nor is still) a profound mystic. But this kind of **freedom** satisfied the need of more or less every human being much better than the lack of freedom of contemporary life to dwell again and again within the abode of the divine.

For, to my mind, there can be no question that man is mystic being beside being scientifically, artistically or morally minded. In our days, especially since Second World War, man is being robbed of that freedom, and that deprivation is caused both by the kind of opinion falsely called enlightenment already spoken of and by the social development influenced by dialectical materialism which falsely claims that there is no such thing as the divine.

Moreover, owing to the combination of the technological and the economic development, each generation, meaning young people approaching their twenties, is placed again and again in an intolerable situation due to the fact, that as soon as one believes to have had a good idea, he — when looking around himself — finds that this idea has already arisen and has even readily been used to fabricate the most elaborate gadgets and devices which can be bought in the stores for a ridiculously cheap price. Now, the only enterprise of the mind which radically eschews that sell-and-buy sort of activity is **mystic contemplation** (for, even the artists — painters, musicians, playwrights and others — have been taken in the tongs of hectic life by tenants of the galeries, the shows, by television etc., and the moralists — lawyers, politicians, diplomats, members of charitable institutions and the like — have been engaged by the press, the various mass media, national and international propaganda, and what have you). So much so, that it really looks as if the only escape were a dedication to contemplative life, at least from time to time, or whenever the urgence manifests itself to one. And yet, practical life so often seems to oppose a veto to that dedication! apart from the fact that the faci-

lities to learn how to authentically contemplate are simply either missing in so many places of the world, or so often degraded to dangerous ideological training institutions.

In Islam, — as far as I am aware, for my knowledge to it is terribly poor, — the very idea of **surrender** to an inaccessible God was to lead again and again the narrow-minded and guardians-of-the-law-like among theologians to condemn a mysticism which was mainly, — like that of HASAN BASRI in the first century already or the one still more passionate of RABI'A of Basra in the second century of the hegira, — to celebrate the *'ishq*, yon amorous desire which in a way interferes with God's own intimate Life. Still, all the long evolution of Islamic mysticism seems to me to point towards that which, with the masters of mystic poetry like IBN 'ARABI and JALAL AL-DIN RUMI in the 7th century H., culminates in the rapture of a divine love which situates mystic contemplation in the form of the so-called mystical union beyond any specific religion.

That sort of mystic contemplation, which as authentic mysticism can, I claim, be taught since it is taught in Indian as well as in Sufi tradition, deserves to be learnt and experienced by all who have a minimum of trend or gift toward it — and that implies everybody in principle, if not in practice. For that is a wonderful experience.

Yet, the present situation, above all in the West and in the socialist countries, but under their economic and social pressure also in ever increasing manner more or less everywhere, is that of a strongly restricted degree of freedom of the knowledge of the values which are not just the scientific ones, most particularly of the divine and its apprehension by mystic contemplation. Indeed there reigns the belief, first that there are only values of truth and their efficient realization, second that the other alledged

values of beauty, of the good, and above all of the divine either are illusory and should at most be left to reactionaries, or can be — not just reduced to values of truth — but even explained by science and shown to be mere constructs of the mind and consequently discarded as values on the ground of their non-objective, wishful character. There are two main directions in which that horrible scientism has developed : the positivistic ideology, and the marxist ideology. The first of them makes the mistake to believe that everything can and must be so to speak "explained away" by science; the second makes a slightly different mistake in believing to be scientific while it is not, and to condemn on that ground all idealism, and since the ancient Platonic Ideas have changed into the contemporary values, a comprehensive axiology like ours is denied.

That, it seems to me, is due to foster unhappiness along the whole line of the neglected values, because instead of letting authentic values come to their right, these are simply arbitrarily destroyed by the artificial reduction which is attempted of them.

Mystic contemplation does disclose such an authentic value, the divine, and the question is, how to re-establish its promotion in a world like ours. For that is the question for a future of mysticism.

IV.

Before answering the question, I should like to dwell upon an aspect of present day society throughout the world where an increasing number of members of the population, especially young people, manifest a tremendous displeasure against the established functioning of that society — the so-called **Establishment** — and foster a sort of continuous revolution which shows itself in the most various aspects ranging from party agitation — be it up to the extreme left or the extreme right — to anarchy — reaching

from a refusal to follow the established conventions to terrorism and crime.

Yet, despite their idealistic (or should we say their ideologistic) background, revolutions have never established that for which they were started, even though they, more or less cruelly, destroyed the old establishment for which they intended to substitute what was meant to be "new and perfect." It was so with the French revolution, it has been again the case with the Marxist-Leninistic kind of socialist revolution of the 20th century, and a lot of idealistically minded people who had engaged themselves in such revolutions have come to question themselves : Why was the said revolution a failure ? My explanation of this phenomenon of repeated failure is, that whereas it is right to wish the disappearance of a way of life based on an ideology necessarily issuing from degenerate ideas, it is wrong to try to substitute for it another ideology, for the latter is bound to sooner or later undergo the same fate as the preceding one. Unfortunately, as history (especially recent and contemporary history) seems to show, those who establish new regimes can never produce anything better than ideologies.

Now, the falsely conceived enlightenment against mystic contemplation is part of an ideology which has become the establishment among the ruling intellectuals of most of the developed countries, yet it ought not through a 'revolution' to make room for a doctrine that would establish the freedom of mystic contemplation so to speak by force, for this would inevitably turn mystic contemplation into an ideology. I think there are two ways in which taking mystic contemplation ideologically can end into regrettable mysticisms — and we can trace them in history, e.g. from the hellenistic times of Alexandria or from Italian Renaissance. One way of mysticistic ideology consists in claiming that mystic thought alone is authentic, other thought being considered

illusory (this is the exact pendant of scientism). The other way is a silly devotion to pseudo-divine things (this is the analogue of science fiction, or of "Kitsch" in art as the German call it(2). One more thing has to be said here : if a revival of mystic contemplation should go either way of ideological mysticism, then nothing valuable would be achieved.

This remarks has its importance in connection with the question of a future of mysticism. For, firstly, and generally speaking, the discountent which manifests itself in the middle of contemporary society is partly due to precisely the absence of the freedom of mystic contemplation : partly yes, but even to a much greater extent than is commonly believed. Secondly, and specifically speaking, since it appears then desirable to establish the conditions under which that freedom can exist, this establishment should not be such that the ideological situation arises, but insure the authenticity of the exercise of mystic thought by all those who feel inclined towards it; especially there should be a tolerance towards it on the side of the official tenants of the religion recognized at such and such place.

When we look around us, we see that a great many schools, centers and institutions have grown and flourish at least all over the Western world, from California to Scandinavia, and they are pratically all based on some practice said to be of genuine Hindu origin, or people travel to India and other Asiatic countries in order to plunge themselves, — as they think, — into the authentic atmosphere of mysticism. But when we examine the activities of all these centers and the way they advertise their

2. I have explained these relationship elsewhere, See A. MERCIER, **La menace des idéologies et du mysticisme en face de la métaphysique (filosofia,** Yearbook of the Research Center for Greek Philosophy of the Academy of Athens, Vol. 8-9, 1978/79, pp. 16-29).

teaching and the kind of things they practice, we discover that a great deal of it is humbug; there is even more to it : more than once have they been found to develop criminal activities, mainly for reasons of scandalous financial pressure upon their adherents; so that in so far as it can be said that mysticism is gaining ground again, it mostly can at best be compared with ideologies of old like in late Alexandrian times, often rather disgusting to the eyes of those who have a respectful feeling for genuine, authentic mystic contemplation. In a way, our contemporary Western world reminds of licentious Alexandria of old.

I shall not dwell on the innumerable individuals and groups who practise taking drugs. The fact that the pratice does not lead to genuine mystical contemplation has been clearly shown by others. [3] It has become a world-wide problem for the police much more than for the philosopher.

Yet one other thing should be added here. Genuine mystics are not cases for psychiatry. I have known personally a young girl who is an authentic mystic and who has been by mistaken intervention of both her parents and the authorities of her country scandalously tormented by ignorant psychiatrists; she luckily came safe out of it, till a famous psychiatrist who is my friend declared her absolutely sound yet recognized that she is a genuine mystic.

V

Under these cirmustances, I believe that the only criterium to be applied to the problem of a 'Future of mysticism' must reside in the question : Can genuine mystic contemplation make people happy ? (or should we rather say : 'more happy ?)

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3. See e.g. LOUIS GARDET, **La mystique** (P.U.F. Paris 1970, p. 1-127, esp. p. 12ss.

The use of the comparative 'more happy' rather than just 'happy' is due to the circumstance, that surely mystic contemplation does not hold the prerogative to be the only source of happiness.

But one should not forget in respect of happiness that it actually only is one side of a state of mind or soul. Happiness does not exist but for its opposite which is woefulness or dole. Dole, or grief is there, **when we do not know** : do not know **how, what, why, whence, whither**... The how and the what together are more or less the questions relevant to the science, the arts and to morality. The what and the why together are more or less the questions relevant to metaphysics, to poetry and to personal ethics. The whence and whither, however, lead to a limit to further questions escaping all discourse, to a mode of relating the mind to Being which does not seem to rest with the judicative activities ; for these interrogative adverbs are used in phrases like : "no one knows whence she comes" — "return whence you came" ... (as taken from the **Concise Oxford Dictionary**) ; whence and whither open the mind to questions, whose answers ultimately constitute a knowledge of a kind different from the knowledge by judgment. It is a knowledge that is given us, not one which we gain by our own investment upon some goods standing or lying opposite us, but one avoiding discourse and granted us by a kind of grace issuing from Capital Being.

I have at the beginning suggested that there should be a leisure to contemplate, calling it even a **freedom.** I believe that knowledge and freedom are closely related, because freedom consists in the knowledge and even in the acknowledgment, that we are not free, since we are always within boundaries which prevents us to do anything we might wish to do. That acknowledgment of our 'unfreedom' grounds our freedom perhaps still more profoundly through the mystic experience than through the

other modes of knowledge. For, indeed, to be integrated by mystic experience into the very bosom of Being makes us on the one hand radically unfree since it amounts so to speak to a quasi-destruction of our self. But at the same time it endows us with such a radical consciousness (in the sense derived from **con-scienta** : knowing with-in) of the one-ness of all being, that it liberates us from all boundaries which belong to the finite and the multiple — actually there are no boundaries within the one-ness and infinitude of that Capital Being. For that reason, mystic knowledge is a radical freedom issuing from a radical unfreedom and it is crowned by radical happiness or kind of bliss which stems from the mastering of the corresponding dole or radical woe in the quasi-destruction of our self.

A future of mysticism has therefore, it seems to me, a sense and a significance if and only if it can flourish as a freedom of man to devote himself — to some degree of his choice or as he is urged by destiny or nature — to mystic contemplation, but not if it is meant to degenerate into any form of ideology. That e.g. recent Islamic fundamentalism has some mystical fund seems to be a fact, but it has so very suddenly degenerated into worse than even ideology, that it has become a reprehensible doctrine negating all freedom whatsoever and ignoring that what transcends even the whence and the whiter **is the problem.** A reversal like that is a shame for religion and a scandal for philosophy, since it flouts the majesty of God.

Ideologies are opening the first doors toward evil. We have experienced it with Nazim too, yet at the origin there was a sort of experience akin to the mystic one, with **this** difference, that it kept within a finite, wordly image of the truly infinite abode of the divinity, which of course was a fake.

Such horrible examples as well as the examples quoted earlier seem to show that it is easier to propagate pseudo-mystics than to teach authentic mystics. It is also easier to propagate science fiction than to teach genuine science.

How to re-establish a climate suited to the promotion of genuine mystic contemplation is therefore a difficult question. To my mind, it requires first a well balanced dialogue between **philosophy** and **religion,** i.e. between philosophers and theologians, assuming from both groups a **reciprocal tolerance** which is — unfortunately — seldom at hand in their minds. Then there should accordingly be a radical change in teaching in schools assuming that not only school programs but also the training of teachers take the said dialogue into consideration. Presently, people as well as governmental authorities feel more concerned with the elimination of pollution than with the establishment of the leisure to contemplate. But once the pollution and environmental problem is solved, the problem of the leisure may come up to the consciousness of all : not from a socialistic point of view claiming more salary for less work, but from a genuine mystic insight, for, unfortunately, socialism is totally blind to mystical contemplation, since it substitutes society for the divine, and society can never be a measure of comparable size with God.

A last consideration may be yet put forward. It is possible that we live in times marking the beginning of the decay and even disappearance of some of, if not all, the specific religions practised in the world. There are signs of such a decay. Some of the earlier religions — the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman, the Germanic and other ones — have disappeared in the course of history (perhaps because they were polytheistic, which made them obsolete in comparison with monotheistic ones, owing to the

circumstance that, in contradistinction to Hinduism and Buddhism, they were purely polytheistic, meaning that they did not imply any basic principle equivalent to an undifferentiated principle like Brahman). Today, here are four main religions practised in the world, two with an undifferentiated prime divinity : Hinduism and Buddhism, two with a personal God : Christianity and Islam. The former ones are tolerant, the later are not although speakers of Islam maintain that Islam is tolerant. Their eventual disappearance may occur, either from the fact that, within a world which may become united, they cannot coexist as mutually contrariant, or owing to an attack from a powerful, atheistic, worldwide, regime or still from their own inner decay because people simply 'do not believe' any more.

At the other extreme, however, the appearance of a religion among the people is, not a **human**, but a **divine** decision. I maintain in this connection that all anthropological, i.e. scientific, explanations of the origin of religion as a 'phenomenon' are wrong because these explanations are human inventions based on ideological assumptions of scientism and/or positivism.

If present religions disappear, and if it pleases God, a new religion may then arise, much rather — I think — than any syncretism of the old ones. If that be the case, then the situation will be like before.

But if, say for for a long time, mankind finds itself deprived of any specific religion whatsoever, as seems to have been the case for centuries in ancient China, there will, it seems, at least remain man's need and hunger for mystic contemplation, which of course is not philosophy itself (especially not metaphysics), but builds a major part of it since it is the non-judicative, i.e. contemplative mode of knowledge best suited to preserve the relationship between Man and God.

So there is at least that hope for the future !



SHIBLI SHUMAYYIL AND RELIGION*

Ahmed Madi (Jordan)

Shibli Shumayyil is a pioneer in the fields of philosophy, history, and sociology of religion in the modern Arab East. He tackled religion from philosophical, historical and sociological perspectives. I will attempt in my paper to make a survey of the perspectives through which Shumayyil tackled religion, by analysing and assessing his interdisciplinary approach to religion.

Origin of Religion :

Shumayyil studied religion as an unbiased scientific researcher by detaching himself completely of anything religious. He, therefore, looked upon religion as a historian and analysed it philosophically and scientifically from various angles.

According to Shumayyil, religion does not come from a divine source, but is rather man-made. However, the makers of religions are not ordinary people, but are great social reformers who have sought the welfare and happiness of people and society. Shumayyil writes: "the goal of all religions is one because they are based on a rational basis laid down by certain people; and if some of us do not accept the fact that these people are surrogates, nobody can argue about their greatness and their extraordinary **minds."**

So long as religion is man's production, how then did it originate ? And how did it develop to become what it is today ?

Shumayyil's answers to these questions show the strong impact of Darwin's theory of evolution on him. This is confirmed by Ali Hilal when he states : "within his evolutionary perspective,

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Shumayyil interprets the origin of religion as man's impotence towards the natural forces. When man was confronted with phenomena or incidents for which he could not provide convincing explanations, he resorted to the idea of religion."(1) A. Hilal directs us to the frame of reference which Shumayyil adopted in his interpretation of the origin of religion, and he uncovers the circumstances that led to the emergence of religions. Hence, all religions, according to Shumayyil were born out of beliefs based upon superstitions and myths which resulted from man's lack of knowledge and control over the environment. Thus, he writes : "religions evolved and took different forms until they reached their present status. Religions resemble the higher creatures which evolved out of lower forms being of the same natural elements. Religions evolved out of beliefs and superstitions resulting from man's limited knowledge about the natural phenomena around him."(2)

Consequently, we can say that ignorance is the reason behind the emergence of religion. In other words, in ancient times man was ignorant of the surrounding phenomena and could not explain them in a satisfactory way since he had not yet discovered the laws that govern these phenomena. Besides, man was controlled by the natural phenomena. Nature turned man into a slave and rendered him incapable of becoming conscious of his enslavement, therefore, man's only concern was to approximate himself to various ways. Hence, absence of knowledge about the natural phenomena paved the way for the rise of religions, and this ignorance led, in turn, to man's fear of those phenomena on the grounds that an unknown power controls them, and that identity of that power cannot be unfolded by man since it takes different forms. Shumayyil exemplifies his interpretation : "Primitive man was ignorant of many of the things around him, and he thought they had an outward impact and, thus, felt afraid for himself lest this power should be a manifestation of an inherent rational power that controls these visible phenomena. Man's anxiety drove him

into subordination to this imagined power, and later on he turned this invisible power into a spirit and then developed it further into a god, and imagined his god in his own image, becoming angry when he feels angry and vice versa. So, he offered the gifts and made sacrificial offerings and performed rituals and created taboos. Later this tendency in man became more profound and was reinforced through natural heredity, and the belief was passed down to man's offspring through imitation."(3)

Shumayyil further developed his interpretation of the origin of religion stating that it lies in dreams. Primitive man dreamed and his dreams developed into illusions. From the dreams which man saw in his sleep were the material out of which he weaved religions.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that Shumayyil lays a major emphasis on ignorance as a source of religion. However, he also stresses another factor, namely, self-love. For man seeks to achieve his own welfare and good. And since men differ in the ways and means of achieving that end (i.e. self-love), their position and status vary accordingly. One group seeks self-love in being superior, while another group finds it in subordination. The superiors are intelligent people, while the subordinates are simple-minded, and naïve. Religions are the same all over the world, and can be measured according to two factors : mastery of the superiors over those who are simpleminded, and the satisfaction of those simple-minded with survival, and both are different manifestations of self-love. Hence, out of the first group emerged the masters, while the slaves grew out of the latter. The intelligent ones, or the masters, dominated and controlled the naïve, and the purpose of both was realized. Hence, self-love makes man wish for himself all the good, or what he imagines to be good, and stays away from what he considers evil. That is, man sees his welfare according to his temperament and finds the means of realizing it accordingly. And if he sometimes mis-

takes the means, he never misses the goal which is the realization of his own comfort.[4]

From the above citation, we observe the strong impact of the French philosophers on Shumayyil. The idea of the origin of religion as being the result of the coming together of two groups of people one representing the naïve and the other representing intelligence, goes back to Voltaire. And the belief that ignorance is the source of religion is a basic idea adopted by the French materialists in the Eighteenth century. The idea was confirmed later on by Feuerbach in the nineteenth century, who regarded man's dependence on the outside world together with man's limited knowledge, as the roots out of which religions grew.

Darwin's Theory of Evolution :

After having tackled the origin of religion, we should ask the following question : what is the impact of Darwin's theory on Shumayyil's treatment of religion, considering that Shumayyil was the first prominent Darwinian who introduced the theory into the modern Arab East ?

Shumayyil's point of departure is that Darwin's theory of the origin and evolution of man can be applied to all phenomena. Consequently, Darwin's theory can provide an adequate explanation to the phenomenon of religion because, like the species, it has one origin, undergoes certain mutations and struggles with its equals."[5] Hence, the principle of struggle for survival is not limited to the world of animals and plants, but may also be extended to religion. According to this principle, the living being is incapable of withstanding the struggle unless he can accomodate to the external environment, and what is said about the living being may also apply to religion in the same degree. For the religion which is capable of being more adaptive to the temporal circumstances is the one that survives the struggle against the

other religions. Shumayyil writes : "Just as the victorious species is the most adaptive to the external conditions, the victorious religions are also those which are most suited to the conditions of the time."[6] We can rightly state that Shumayyil, by applying Darwin's theory **ad verbatum** to the evolution of religions, disregards a very important fact, namely, that religion is a social phenomenon, and what is social cannot be examined as an organic being because what is social is qualitatively different from the organic. Consequently to depend totally on Darwin's theory in interpreting the evolution of religions is simply an error in method. For Shumayyil did not differentiate between the natural and social origin of religion because he thought there was no difference between the two : "the two basic factors underlying all religions are the species and natural selection."[7] Here, it would be worth clarifying that Shumayyil raised the issue of faith in response to the row which Darwin's theory caused within the circles of the faithful. Shumayyil wrote an article on ethics in relation to Darwinism in which he shed light on the relation between faith, on the one hand, and Darwin's theory on the other. Excerpts of that article were published in an article entitled "The Truth" in volume I of the complete works of Shumayyil. The published excerpts help us to grasp Shumayyil's manner of understanding religion in the light of Darwin's theory. We should also mention in this respect that Shumayyil's purpose in this article was to eliminate the contradiction between Darwin's theory and religion. He says : "I meant then to reconcile that theory (Darwin's) and religion... relying upon the assumption that faith is very broad and can accomodate the theory of evolution."[8] What strongly confirms our proof that Shumayyil asserted the notion of an independent, special creation is not corroborated by science, namely because the species — including man — evolved according to uniform natural laws. This scientific fact, however, does not shake the firm belief in the existence of a creator. Shumayyil states : "Is not the justification of the world by scientific laws enough to confirm and reinforce the greatness of the power that

created these laws ?"(9) It is obvious that this conclusion is an admission by Shumayyil of the two issues : the first, that the world is governed by special laws; second, that a power created the laws.

It is clear from the above mentioned that Shumayyil wanted to say that God does not create man directly but creates first the laws of nature which lead to the emergence of man as a consequence of the laws. If, however, a contradiction may occur between the religion and the scientific outlook, the first has to give in to the latter. "Religion should not stand as an obstacle in the way of science and should not, at the same time, engage in a struggle with it which will be harmful for both and in which religion has no chance of winning."(10) Moreover, the contradiction cannot exist between science and faith if we depended upon science in the first place and understood religion in the right way. In short, Shumayyil tried to reconcile the theory of evolution on the one hand, and faith on the other, from a scientific perspective.

The crucial question remains : was Shumayyil honest in his attempt to reconcile Darwin's theory and religion ?

In my own opinion, Shumayyil's purpose behind his attempt was to spread the theory within the circles of Arab intellect who opposed the theory on the grounds that it contradicts with religion, and aims at destroying it. Darwin's theory was met with strong opposition by many Arab thinkers on top of whom was Al-Afghani, which made it inevitable for Shumayyil to take that conciliatory attitude in order to make the theory more appealing and acceptable. Most probably, Shumayyil was influenced by the role played by Thomas Huxley, Darwin's greatest supporter when he was still alive. He tried to prove to the Church that Darwin's theory does not touch upon the fundamental religious teachings with the purpose of ridding Darwin of his enemies, the ecclesiastical order and the fanatic religious thinkers. Shumayyil's attempt is not very different from Huxley's.

Similarity of Religions

Shumayyil tried to point out the origin of religions and to unmask the common factors in all religions. He thought that all religions have one source, namely, revelation. All religions alike rely on faith and surrender. Therefore, it would be absurd to try to establish a rational state in support of one religion rather than the other. And since religions, according to Shumayyil, rely on faith and surrender, they cannot resist the shocks directed by syllogism and proof. The reason is that the teachings of religions do not agree with the natural sciences on the one hand, and are contradicted by the very acts which people attribute to the power which they consider the source of such acts, on the other. (11) Within this context, Shumayyil cites a number of examples to verify his own point of view. He asserts : "They say that man is free and is, thus, responsible for his acts. However, they say that God created man according to His will. The contradiction is quite obvious because both statements are mutually exclusive." (12)

It is clear that Shumayyil cannot possibly perceive the possibility of combining determinism and choice. For him man's acts are either preordained, and in this case he is not responsible for his acts, or he is totally free and responsible for his acts. He has no doubt, however, that man has a free will to choose and is, thus, responsible for his own acts. He cites another contradiction : "They say that man's lot is predetermined and preordained, after having said that this power is full of justice and mercy." (13) It seems that the second contradiction is closely related to the first and could be thus, regarded as its extension. This is because man, according to Shumayyil, is either free to choose or is not, and cannot be both. If he is free he is responsible for his destiny, but if he is not free to choose he cannot be held responsible for the existing social injustice among people. Consequently, it would be unjust to make people unequal.

We understand from Shumayyil's words that the believers think that their religions are true, and that other religions are untrue. And, depending on the civilizational level of one nation, it can dominate other nations by enforcing its own religion upon them and denying all the other religions on the grounds that they are untrue. It may even try to harm the believers of other religions. For religions are all "similar in the sense that every religion claims for itself the truth and persecutes either directly or indirectly the followers of other religions."(14)

The similarity referred to by Shumayyil makes him raise the very important issue of the truth which, according to him, is one. Therefore, it is inevitable, according to the rationale of religions, that truth should be embodied in one religion. However, all religions claim to be true and deny the truth of other religions, which cause perplexity. He says : "If all religions are true then truth is one indivisible whole and can only exist in one religion. So which religion is it that possesses the truth, and what is truth ?"(15)

Another factor which makes for the similarity of religions is the assertion of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection in the afterlife."(16) He goes on to say that the resurrection of the soul has no scientific basis. For the natural sciences, in general, and the theory of evolution in particular, deny it. Therefore, there is no consensus over the issue of the resurrection of the soul."

Shumayyil's argument stems from the assumption of the unity of body and soul, and that the soul is, in the last analysis, a form of matter and what applies to matter applies to soul as well. Matter does not come out of the void and is not transformed into nothing. It is recreated anew, for death and life are nothing but transformation of matter."(17)

Shumayyil took geat interest in the importance of the relation between religion and civilization. The motive behind this interest is that many researches have treated the relation between religion and civilization by attributing it either to progress or to backwardness. He radically disagrees with this opinion, and says : "According to my own opinion, they (the researchers) are wrong in considering religion as the major factor of either progress or backwardness since this would apply to all religions as well as to one religion at all ages."(17) He adds : "In fact, the relation between religion and civilization, so far as its impact on progress and backwardness is concerned, is only accidental. Otherwise civilization would never progress or regress while under the authority of one religion."(18)

Such contradiction has one explanation, namely that Shumayyil understands the relation between religion and civilization and the resulting progress or regress on the grounds of necessity or causality, besides regarding religion as a factor of reform of people's conditions. In short, Shumayyil regards religion as an instrument of progress of civilization, although he states : "Religion, according to me, has no direct connection with civilization, so far as its impact on its progress or regress is concerned, or its impact on religions is one because the origin of all religions is one and aims at one social goal, i.e. reform of man's living conditions."(20)

The role of religion in history and its impact on civilization are determined in the light of a number of factors, the most important of which is the subjective factor. That is to say, the role of religion and its impact are determined by man's understanding of them. History confirms that men have understood one religion and practised its teachings in different parts of the world. Consequently, the role of religion in human history and its impact on

human civilization depend on people's understanding and practice of that religion.

Religion **per se** has no direct relation with either progress or backwardness. For people in general, and men of religion in particular, are the ones who can make religion either progressive or reactionary. That is to say, it is the role of the people that determines the movement of history and the path of society. Hence, we observe that religion has played different roles according to the diversity of understanding and practice of people. Religion **per se** can neither be described as progressive or reactionary except in the light of its impact on people's minds and their practices. To confirm this point of view, I quote Sheikh Mostafa El-Ghalayini : "Christianity is not behind Europe's advancement and civility, just as Islam is not responsible for the backwardness and regression of Muslims."(21)

Shumayyil's conviction that religion is an instrument of enhancing civilization is reinforced by his insistence that Islam and Christianity "meet at one point, namely, trying to reform man's life." However, "if, at any time, and in such situations, the opposite happens, this is attributed to social factors beyond the essence of religion."(22) It is worth noting that Shumayyil does not distinguish between divine and social or natural religions in their relation to civilization, since Islam, Christianity and Buddhism have one origin in this respect. Shumayyil says : "Whether you accept it or not, the origin of religions in relation to civilization, is one even in social religions. I say 'social religions' because there is such a religion which is different from other religions which has at its basis humanity and good manners or, in other words, virtue and that is Buddhim."(23)

Religion represents a number of legislations "the social roots of which do not contradict with the interests of the community."(24) And history provides the evidence that religious ideology

has been frequently used as a basis for social protest and revolution against the oppressors. Hence, religion can play an important positive role in the struggle for social progress and national liberation and a better life. Consequently, Shumayyil takes a positive attitude towards religion. For he thinks that religion is not an obstacle in the way of social progress and can be a means of civilizational evolution, and his attitude does not apply to a particular religion but extends to all religions both the divine and the natural or 'social' religions.

Such an attitude is not strange to all pioneers of modern and contemporary Arab thought. Many other thinkers have adopted the same attitude, particularly Salama Moussa and Amin El-Rihani. This attitude constitutes a clear trend in modern and contemporary Arab thought, and Shumayyil is one of its pioneers.

To complete the picture, it is worth indicating that Shumayyil did not sustain this attitude towards religion until the end of his life. He later adopted another attitude totally different from the one I have just presented. For he emphatically believed that man is capable of realizing progress and achieving a better life without religions and that man will remain unable to reform society so long as society upholds religion. He writes : "Man does not reform society so long as there is religion and nation united in one."(25) Shumayyil believes that reform depends upon considering peace as man's religion and the world his homeland. He writes : "The whole world is man's homeland and his religion is peace and not strife, sedission and conflict."

Shumayyil never doubts man's ability to progress and develop without religion : "The fact that man can reform his living conditions without religions should not be doubted by anyone."(26) Shumayyil even goes as far as asserting that reforming the conditions of any nation depends upon the weakening of people's belief in religion. Furthermore, he adds that religion becomes strong only

"when a nation suffers from decadence and disintegration. For the progress of any nation relates conversely to religion, that is, religion becomes strong when the nation becomes weak and decadent, and progress can only be achieved when religion becomes weak."(27) Perhaps the reason behind the latter statement is Shumayyil's strong conviction that religion can lead to dogmatism and fanaticism and other such negative qualities leading upto enmity between people and sometimes to bloodshed. He states : "Nobody denies the responsibility of religions for the nations' progress or backwardness and their dogmatism and hostility towards each other. If we turn to history, we find ample proof of wars and bloodshed triggerred by religious dogmatism.(28) Shumayyil particularly emphasizes the negative role of religion in the Far East where religion still causes all sorts of unrest.

I would like to repeat that it is the understanding and practice of religion that determines the social role of religion. It seems to me that Shumayyil confused religion with men of religion.

Men of Religion and Civilization

We have learned so far that Shumayyil did not take one consistent attitude towards religion. However, he was more inclined to regard religion as a means of improving people's conditions in this world. But his attitude towards men of religion was antagonistic because they did not grasp the true essence of religion or because they exploited religion to achieve personal interests which in turn led to social backwardness.(29) It is worth noting that Shumayyil's negative attitude towards men of religion is not a unique one in the history of Arab thought and is not strictly limited to those non-religiously-minded thinkers.

It is noteworthy that Shumayyil regards men of religion wholly responsible for all evils throughout human history. Conse-

quently, he justifies the most severe penalty directed against religious leaders.

We conclude thus that Shumayyil adopted a positive attitude vis-à-vis religion and waged a fierce attack against men of religion. He exaggerated for he laid the responsibility of all negative aspects on men of religion. The reality, however, is that men of religion represent one of the many social groups, besides, they perform diverse roles in different ages and societies. This is because they stand on the side of one class or another which, in turn, determines their social role. To judge whether men of religion are reactionary or progressive, one should rely upon an accurate study of their roles throughout history in general and the social path in particular. They may be progressive in one society whereas they could be described as reactionary in another.

Separation of Religion and State

In consistence with his campaign against men of religion, Shumayyil called for the separation of religion and state so that religion becomes a personal matter with which the state does not interfere.

Furthermore, Shumayyil was of the deep conviction that the Arab society will never develop so long as its people are divided between Islam and Christianity. This was his point of departure in insisting upon the necessity of separating religion from the state since people adhere to different religions and governments should not adhere to one religion as long as they govern people of different beliefs whom they should unite in one common social interest, or otherwise governments lead people to destruction.

The question then is :

What does separation of religion and state mean ?

Shumayyil's answer is that separation of religion and state means first and foremost that education in state schools should be freed from religion, i.e. should become civil education because the primary goal of state schools is to "teach science not religion." And since the state should not adopt a religion it should likewise not interfere in the affairs of religious schools. It is, therefore, the right of individuals and groups, to establish religious schools but without requiring the financial support of the state. But "the state schools which are founded with people's money should not teach religion." (30)

It is clear enough that Shumayyil's secular orientation is not antagonistic to religion, but it restricts the role of religion within specific bounds which should not be surpassed. It respects religion and prescribes limits to its freedom. And the secularization which he adopts means that "the state should be neutral towards religion." (31)

Religion and Freedom of Thought

Shumayyil gives priority to freedom of thought because it constitutes a fundamental basis for man's happiness. From that angle Shumayyil criticizes religions on the grounds that they restrict freedom of thought. And such restriction is enough proof that religions are a source of man's unhappiness.

Some of Shumayyil's critical observations of religions is the belief in the absolute and abstract and the denial of the relative and concrete. The most flagrant example is the religious interpretation of good and evil. Religious teachings are not different from philosophers' convictions as far as the promotion of good and denial of evil are concerned, according to Shumayyil.

Yet they differ in that the philosophers' teachings enable reason and freedom of thought to prevail and thus tackle things according to time and space. Hence, it does not admit of absolute evil, whereas religion treats absolute good and evil and, thus, restricts reason.(32)

Shumayyil greatly appreciates Luther for, he thinks, that his religious teaching have given scope to reason and practised some of its freedom. Luther's doctrine, if compared with other Christian dogmas, is far more rational and less rigid because it is less restricting to human reason than other doctrines. And Luther's revolution has special significance in the history of European people and their development. For, "had it not been for Luther's religious revolution no one would have been able to visualize the deterioration of man in Europe."(33)

As a matter of fact, Shumayyil considers Luther's religious revolution particularly significant to the French revolution. Also, for it is, in the last analysis, the result of Luther's revolution which paved the way by liberating the French reason and enabling it thus to make radical changes in the feudal system.(34) Furthermore, Shumayyil believes that the nations that adopt Luther's teachings will inevitably achieve progress, and the best proof are the English people.

Shumayyil's admiration of Luther is justifiable for his religious reformation played a great role in history. However, he only concentrates on the positive side of Luther's revolution whereas he should have considered the different aspects. For Luther was against the Catholic conservatism and the people's peasant revolution at the same time. We should also note that religious reformation in its first stages was part of the anti-feudalist movement. Yet it soon regressed into a conciliatory position and became more allied with the Catholics and feudalist reactionaries. Anyhow, Luther placed a significant role in liberating people's religious consciousness.

Shumayyil adopted a very positive attitude towards the glorious Quran. He showed great respect and reverence to it. If he directed a fierce attack on men of religion he highly appreciated religious scriptures and prophets. The proof is Shumayyil's attitude towards Islam. According to him, Islam encourages good and peace not aggression. He writes : "Islam is a social religion that prohibits all evils. It fights only those who fight it. It does not attack people, but protects the weak and needy. According to Quranic legislations, Quran is innocent of the atrocities committed in the name of religion by men."(35)

Shumayyil also proclaims that Islam supports the poor and attempt to improve their conditions by means of making them participate in the wealth of the rich through alms. Besides, Islam contains exceptional wisdom and lofty morals which make its social principles meet with the goals of the great philosophers and social reformers of today."(36) Islam also widens the scope of 'labour'. It is the religion of sensible and its social goal is to improve man's world in a peaceful way. Besides, Prophet Muhamed's legislations are a practical, material, social system aiming at worldly ends concentrating upon practical legislations, even the dictates of worship. Even paradise conforms to this world view.

However, Shumayyil thinks that the impact of Greek culture on Muslims has negatively affected them. For the introduction of abstract Greek philosophy and theology made Muslims turn away from practical material aims of Islam to abstract scholastic discourse which has nothing to do with religion. This shows that Shumayyil did not quite appreciate the impact of Greek philosophy on Muslims, which was subject to the conflicts that took place in the Islamic socio-political, philosophical and religious life. Such impact had resulted in a qualitative change in the Muslim's life. For example, the theoretical and ideological controver-

sies in the fields of jurisprudence and theology between theologians and jurists reflected the new problems and the different proposed solutions. This demonstrated the impact of foreign cultures, particularly Greek culture, upon human legacy. Here, it should be noted, the indebtedness of human civilization to Islam, in sofar as it preserved and reproduced Greek tradition and developed it. Furthermore, the decadence of the Islamic nations has no relation to Islam. It is not the result of those people's belief in Islam, for instance. The responsibility of backwardness should rather be attributed to religious leaders and political rulers. Islam, undoubtedly, is not an obstacle in the way of progress, and if the Muslim people desired to achieve the status of developed nations they could do so through Islam.

It should be noted here that Shumayyil criticized Lord Cromwell who dealt in his book with the relation between religion and civilization. Cromwell tackled the essence of religion when speaking about Egyptians and other Islamic nations, emphasizing that religion is the main obstacle in the way of achieving progress. He also said that Quranic jurisprudence does not conform with civilization at all times, although there are some exceptions. Shumayyil defended Islam and attacked men of religion whom he held responsible for backwardness. Religion, according to him, can lead to civilization and civilization itself must be governed by religion and men of religion should follow the right dictates of religion by depending upon reason in implementing religious laws in a way that copes with the progress of society and the changing social conditions at all times.

Hence, Shumayyil accords great importance to reason as a fundamental factor in developing religion to make it cope with the spirit of every age. He, therefore, encourages 'idjtihad' which he considers fundamental to religious faith. He also considers it

a means of achieving an interaction between divine religious laws and the changing social conditions.

Shumayyil adopts a similarly positive stance towards the Prophet Muhamed whom he admires as much as Christ. Concluding, Shumayyil, coming from a Christian family, admired both the Quran and Prophet Muhamed. He did so as an objective researcher.

Christianity and Jesus Christ

Shumayyil admired Christ and considered him as a philosopher and social reformer. He did not distinguish between Quran and the Bible. His admiration for the Bible derives from the Christian doctrine of love which leads to tolerance.

However, in his analysis of Christianity, Shumayyil distinguished between Christianity and Islam. He considered Christianity as a religion of theory and abstraction and not of practice and what is concrete.

In conclusion, Shumayyil treated religion from many different angles. He also analysed religion as a social phenomenon. This was an innovation at his time and break away from conventional approach. This made him a pioneer in this field. He was also a major controversial figure. But, perhaps, his importance lies in the attacks made against him by men of religion. In short, Shumayyil held a basically critical attitude towards traditional beliefs and laws which made him a pioneer of many thoughts and trends in modern Arab thought.

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6. **Ibid.**
7. **Ibid.**
8. **Ibid.,** p. 268.
9. **Ibid.**
10. Mounir Moussa, **Arab Thought in the Modern Age,** Beirut, Dar al-Hakika, 1973.
11. S. Shumayyil, See No. 3.
12. **Ibid.**
13. **Ibid.**
14. **Ibid.**
15. **Ibid.**
16. **Ibid.,** p. 51.
17. **Ibid.,** p. 57.

18. **Ibid., p. 61.**

19. **Ibid., p. 58.**

20. **Ibid., p. 70.**

21. S. Shumayyil, see No. I, p. 58.

22. **Ibid.**

23. **Ibid.**, p. 62.

24. **Ibid.**, p. 75.

25. See No. 3, p. 367.

26. **Ibid.** 51.

27. **Ibid.**

28. **Ibid.**, pp. 51-52.

29. See No. I, pp. 61-62.

30. **Ibid.**

31. Joseph Meghizal, **Arabism and Secularism**, Beirut, Dar al-Nahar, 1980, p. 21.

32. **Ibid.**, p. 53.

33. **Ibid.**

34. **Ibid.**, pp. 53-54.

35. See No. I, p. 221.

36. **Ibid.**, p. 57.